School Connectedness: The Benefits of a School-Based Peer-Mentoring Program for Transitioning Students in Secondary Education

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Abstract

The transition to a new high school can disrupt social networks, cause anxiety, and hinder academic success for secondary students. School-based comprehensive peer-mentoring programs that focus on transitioning secondary students have the potential to alleviate the anxiety of a changing school climate by promoting school connectedness, building peer relationships, and being sensitive to the social, academic, and procedural concerns of transitioning secondary students (Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006). Students who feel connected to school feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school social environment, all of which may guard against student alienation, poor self-esteem, and other deviant behaviors for adolescent youth. The following research paper discusses how focused school-based peer-mentoring programs for adolescents may help to build school and peer connectedness; promote academic achievement, healthy development, and psychological health; increase protective factors; and decrease risky behaviors. A presentation and program guide for secondary administration and staff were developed based on the information found in the literature review.

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School Connectedness: The Benefits of a School-Based Peer-Mentoring Program for Transitioning Students in Secondary Education

Independence and strong social networks are critical needs for adolescents. Adolescent psychological health hinges on family connectedness, meaningful peer relationships, academic achievement, and school connectedness (Hall-Lande, Eisenberg, Christenson, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2007). Because adolescents spend a great deal of time at school, schools are in a unique position to help students build positive peer relationships and increase their sense of school connectedness (Brown, Higgins, & Paulsen, 2003; Roybal, Thornton, & Usinger, 2014). Chapman, Buckely, Sheehan, and Shochet (2013) described school connectedness as "the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included and supported by others in the school social environment" (p. 96). Hall-Lande and colleagues (2007) further defined school connectedness as caring about school and feeling connected to both the school environment and staff. Schools that are able to effectively promote school connectedness among their students may positively affect their student's emotional, social, and academic efficacy.

Quality friendships and positive relationships have been shown to increase school connectedness, all of which serve as protective factors for adolescents. According to Hall-Lande et al. (2007), protective factors promote health and decrease the risk of poor outcomes. Protective factors, such as school and peer connectedness, can guard against student alienation, poor self-esteem, and other deviant behavior. Cross-references on the literature of alienation agree upon Mann's (2001) basic definition of alienation: "the state or experience of being isolated from a group or an activity to which one should belong or in which one should be involved" (p. 8). Student alienation can lead to risky behaviors, such as violence, vandalism, absenteeism, and truancy (Brown et al., 2003). Students who feel alienated from peers, or are

socially isolated, lack the necessary social support to become self-sufficient (Hazler & Denham, 2002). Alienation can have lasting effects on an individual; socially alienated adolescents have a higher chance of living in poverty or becoming increasingly socially isolated as an adult (Brown et al., 2003).

Students who have high-quality, secure relationships are more apt to become independent, determined, and socially competent individuals, all of which are critical for healthy socioemotional and academic development (Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, & McMaken, 2011). There has been exponential growth in school-based mentoring programs to target student performance, student challenges, and academic success (Herrera et al., 2011). For the purpose of this paper it is important to first define academically agreed upon terms for mentoring, mentoring programs, peer mentors, and mentees. A common definition in academic literature defines mentoring as the "structured and trusting relationship that brings young people together with caring individuals who offer guidance, support, and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character of the mentee" (MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, n.d., para. 1). Herrera et al. (2011) defined mentoring programs as programs that "aim to fill such gaps in children's lives, by matching volunteers with youth who could benefit from extra support and guidance" (p. 346). Lastly, DuBois and Karcher (2005) defined peer mentoring as a commonly agreed upon term that describes a situation in which one youth (the peer mentor) helps a same-age peer (the mentee).

Adolescents between the ages of 9 and 14, as well as students transitioning to high school, undergo significant developmental and school-related changes, exposing them to academic, social, and procedural anxieties (Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006; Herrera et al., 2011). The purpose of this research project is to examine school-based peer-mentoring programs and

their association to school and peer connectedness, academic achievement, adolescent development, psychological health, and risky behaviors. The research question addressed in this project is: How have school-based peer-mentoring programs assisted in building school and peer connectedness for transitioning secondary students, specifically incoming ninth graders and students transferring to a new high school?

Literature Review

This literature review will first define the terms utilized throughout the paper using definitions gathered from current academic literature in the field. Next, the literature review will describe the theoretical foundations underlying school and peer connectedness. The literature review will continue to explain school connectedness and components that may influence how connected adolescents feel towards their school environment. Following is a review regarding peer connectedness, and influential factors that may be affected by peer connectedness. The literature review will conclude with a discussion of peer-mentoring programs for secondary education, peer mentoring program models, and program implementation challenges.

Definition of Terms

Academic achievement: A student's ability to adapt to school expectations and norms, often including test scores and other scholastic measures (Hall-Lande et al., 2007).

Alienation: The state or experience of being isolated from a group or an activity to which one should belong or in which one should be involved (Mann, 2001).

Collaborative work: Primarily work that is done through peer interaction (César & Santos, 2006).

Horizontal interactions: Interactions between student/student or teacher/teacher (César & Santos, 2006).

Mentoring: A structured and trusting relationship that brings young people together with caring individuals who offer guidance, support, and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character of the mentee (MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, n.d.)

Mentoring programs: Programs that aim to fill gaps in children's lives by matching volunteers with youth who could benefit from extra support and guidance (Herrera et al., 2011).

Peer mentor: One youth (the peer mentor) who helps a same-age peer (the mentee) (DuBois & Karcher, 2005).

Protective factors: Factors that promote health and decrease the risk of poor outcomes (Hall-Lande et al., 2007).

Risky behaviors: Any action that involves choice, uncertain outcomes, and the potential for negative consequences (Chapman et al., 2013).

School attachment: Having close relationships at school (Catalano, Haggerty, Oesterle, Fleming, & Hawkins, 2004).

School commitment: How invested a student is in his or her education (Catalano et al., 2004).

School connectedness: The extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school social environment (Chapman et al., 2013).

Social capital: The existence of positive relationships with other students and staff members (Roybal et al., 2014).

Social isolation: Experiencing a lack of social support from one or more close peers (Hall-Lande et al., 2007).

Socializing agents: People in a person's life, such as teachers, parents, and peers (Catalano et al., 2004).

Vertical interactions: Interactions between student/teacher (César & Santos, 2006).

Theoretical Foundations

Sociocultural cognitive theory, attachment theory, social control theory, the social development model, reality therapy, and solution-focused brief therapy are all connectedness theories that have speculated about the importance of forming secure relationships to facilitate cognitive and developmental changes (DuBois & Karcher, 2005). Such theoretical foundations work to explain how people are affected by culture, social interactions, connectedness, and goal-oriented behaviors. Schools that integrate a theoretical foundation into a school-based peer-mentoring program are in a better position to implement effective strategies and interventions geared towards increasing school and peer connectedness, promoting protective factors and appropriate developmental learning, and decreasing risk-taking behaviors.

Sociocultural cognitive theory. Vygotsky looked at how social interactions play a role in individual development. Similar to Jean Piaget's constructivist theory, Vygotsky believed that children are active participants in creating their own understanding of the world around them (Nye, 2007; Parke & Gauvain, 2009). However, Vygotsky emphasized the social and cultural context of learning, stating that children do not just construct cognitive development through isolation, but through collaboration and interaction with other people (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Santrock, 2012). Vygotsky theorized that social interactions with others–and outwardly interacting within a cultural world–are essential for cognitive development (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Parke & Gauvain, 2009).

Vygotsky theorized that children learn through a process called internalization, or taking in from the outside (Nye, 2007). Vygotsky believed that youth internalize outside social interactions, and expand and develop those interactions through continued collaboration and interaction with their social and cultural environments. According to Nye (2007), as a child

begins to experience his or her world through outside social interactions–with friends, peers, teachers, or parents–he or she begins to internalize those experiences and acquire new knowledge based off such exchanges. Therefore, if a child's social and cultural connections are genuine and warm, his or her attachment to the world will reflect those same positive qualities.

Internalization is hypothesized to happen because of a process called scaffolding (Nye, 2007). Scaffolding is a term that was first coined by Jerome Bruner, a U.S. cognitive psychologist who was at the forefront of introducing Vygotsky's work to the nation (Nye, 2007). Used to define the instructional process that takes place between a teacher and a student, scaffolding specifically refers to the amount of support the more knowledgeable partner has to offer the student throughout the course of the interaction. During the process, the teacher identifies gaps in the student's ability to perform and fills those gaps, thus providing the student with scaffolding, or support, throughout the process. The main idea behind scaffolding is that the teacher is able to provide assistance where needed until the student has learned to perform the task independently. As this transition occurs, the teacher slowly takes away the scaffolding, ultimately establishing a more independent yet still supportive relationship (Nye, 2007).

Internalization and scaffolding are both linked to Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Vygostky described the ZPD as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined through independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 198). Working in collaboration with individuals who are more skilled or more knowledgeable produces what Nye (2007) calls a "learning edge" (p. 90). A learning edge helps youth go from their actual development (or what they can accomplish on their own without scaffolding) to their potential

development (what they can achieve through collaboration and scaffolding) (Nye, 2007). Vygotsky's theory suggests that transitioning adolescents who are able to form a secure relationship with a peer mentor may be provided with the necessary social support to foster better school and peer connectedness, thus alleviating procedural, social, and academic stressors associated with a new school (DuBois & Karcher, 2005).

School settings that understand the importance of the social and cultural contexts on learning and development, and support the process of internalization and scaffolding, can help students reach a higher level of cognitive development (César & Santos, 2006). According to César and Santos (2006), inclusive learning settings that value horizontal interactions (i.e., student/student) and vertical interactions (i.e., teacher/student) promote a collaborative work environment that empowers individuals to be "legitimate participants" in their learning community (p. 335). Such experiences allow an individual to reach a higher level of mental functioning and a sound attachment to his or her social and cultural world.

Attachment theory, social control theory, and the social development model. Researchers have worked to delineate specific theoretical underpinnings to explain the relationship between student connectedness and risk-taking behaviors (Chapman et al., 2013). According to Chapman et al. (2013), numerous theories have been used to develop school-based risk-taking prevention programs. Three of the most prevalent theories that attempt to explain the relationship between student connectedness and risk-taking behaviors include (a) attachment theory, (b) social control theory, and (c) the social development model (Catalano et al., 2004; Chapman et al., 2013). Attachment theory–which highlights the importance of connecting with adults other than parents–has been used to describe the link between bonding with teachers, peers, other school personnel, and problem behaviors. The social control theory hypothesizes

that delinquent adolescent behavior is due to low levels of bonding, and risky behaviors are a result of weak social bonds and poor school connectedness. The social development theory extends the social control theory by including ways to build positive social bonds, such as learning new skills and increasing access to opportunities that can potentially create new, healthy relationships.

Reality therapy and solution-focused brief therapy. Providing ways to enhance an adolescent's social environment is imperative for healthy bonding to school (Catalano et al., 2004). Karcher, Kuperminc, Portwood, Sipe, and Taylor (2006) posit that peer-mentoring programs should include both developmental and instrumental mentoring. Developmental mentoring focuses on establishing a supportive relationship between the mentor and mentee to facilitate the mentee's social, cognitive, and emotional development (Karcher et al., 2006). Instrumental mentoring emphasizes skill acquisition and goal attainment to help build connectedness (Karcher et al., 2006). Reality therapy and solution-focused brief therapy have the potential to encompass both developmental and instrumental mentoring.

The goal of reality therapy is to help create or repair a person's ability to connect and have meaningful relationships (Corey, 2013). Reality therapy is centered on choice theory, and a basic premise of this theory involves clients making choices that will better affect their outcomes. Corey (2013) summarizes that reality therapy puts responsibility back on the client by taking a deeper look at how effective choices are being made. Therapists using reality therapy establish effective, working relationships with clients. The relationships are supportive and action oriented. Reality therapy educates clients on how to become successful in relationships. This success is achieved through teaching clients about inner and outer connectedness, working to find light and hope in daily living, and developing action plans to achieve desired outcomes.

In reality therapy, therapists utilize the WDEP assessment system. This tool focuses on client Wants, what the client is doing and current Direction, performing self-Evaluations, and ending the process with Planning. Reality therapists also believe that humans are born with five needs: survival, love and belonging, power and control, freedom, and fun. The most important need is love and belonging. If a person does not fulfill the need to love and belong, the other needs suffer.

Solution-focused brief therapy focuses on the future and creating future-oriented goals (Corey, 2013). The therapeutic approach looks at the present and future, with little to no interest regarding how problems emerged. Clients choose their goals they wish to accomplish, and make up meaningful, purposeful, and well-defined action plans. The therapeutic relationship is based on an optimistic outlook and counselors use positive psychology (Henderson & Thompson, 2011). Clients are seen as happy and healthy with the capacity to create solutions to their own problems given some direction and awareness of personal strengths. Clients have the resources to solve their own problems by looking at what is working, and what has worked or not worked in the past (Corey, 2013). Because reality therapy and solution-focused brief therapy are centered on meaningful connections and creating goal-oriented action plans, both are ideal theoretical foundations for mentoring programs wishing to incorporate developmental and instrumental learning.

School Connectedness

A positive school and classroom atmosphere may foster social capital, thus helping students feel connected to their school environment and influencing positive student behaviors (Catalano et al., 2004; Orthner, Jones-Sanpei, Akos, & Rose, 2013). Roybal et al. (2014) defines social capital as the existence of positive relationships with other students and staff members.

Schools are important socializing institutions and play a critical role in promoting student success and helping youth not become alienated from the educational process (Catalano et al., 2004; Schulz, 2011). A number of studies show that sufficient social capital between students; student leaders; and teachers, staff, and administration not only increases academic achievement (Hall-Lande et al., 2007) but also aids in reducing dropout rates (Roybal et al., 2014). Both the school as a whole, and classroom environments specifically, play a vital role in student engagement.

In a study by Catalano and colleagues (2004), the researchers investigated the Seattle Social Development Project (SSDP) and Raising Healthy Children (RHC) to look at school connectedness and its association with risky behaviors, academic performance, and social competence. The authors agreed that school connectedness is influenced by two primary and interdependent components: school attachment–defined as having close relationships at school–and school commitment–defined as how invested a student is in his or her education (Catalano et al., 2004). Both school attachment and school commitment contribute to how connected an adolescent feels to his or her school. Students who are connected, or bonded, to school generally experience positive outcomes, such as higher academic achievement (Catalano et al., 2004). On the contrary, poor school connectedness may lead to deviant peer affiliations and behavior problems for adolescents. Students who did not feel connected to school were at a higher risk for truancy; school noncompletion; violence; and use of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs (Catalano et al., 2004; Schulz, 2011). Research shows that a negative correlation exists between school connectedness and substance use, delinquency and crime, gang membership, sexual activity, and academic problems (Catalano et al., 2004). Increasing school attachment and school commitment for adolescents is imperative for maintaining a sense of adequate school connectedness.

Risky behaviors. School connectedness is negatively associated with risk-taking behaviors for adolescents (Chapman et al., 2013; Wang & Dishion, 2011). In a study by Wang and Dishion (2011), the authors explored how school connectedness directly affects risky behaviors (e.g., substance abuse and antisocial behavior) and deviant peer affiliations for secondary students transitioning from middle school to high school. In their particular research, Wang and Dishion defined deviant peer affiliations as associating with a group of friends that offer each other support and positive reinforcement for oppositional behaviors. The authors specifically explored middle school students' sense of school climate and whether or not school connectedness could moderate the level of influence of deviant peer affiliation on transitioning secondary students. The research reviewed surveys from 1,030 participants who were recruited from school districts in the Pacific Northwest. Fifty-four percent of participants were female and 76 % were European-American. Participants assessed four dimensions of school climate, including academic support, school behavior management, teacher social support, and peer social support.

The authors found that adolescents became increasingly dependent on peers for social and emotional support and development, and students who lacked school connectedness and positive peer groups were at a higher risk of becoming involved in deviant peer groups (Wang & Dishion, 2011). In particular, middle school students who lacked school connectedness while transitioning to high school were at a greater risk for exhibiting risky behaviors and becoming affiliated with deviant peer groups, providing an explanation for the development of adolescent problem behaviors, deviant peer affiliations, and adolescent problem behaviors due to a lack of school connectedness.

As previously mentioned, Catalano et al. (2004) studied the SSDP and RHC programs to examine the association between school connectedness and risky behaviors, academic performance, and social competence. Both the SSDP and RHC studies sought to reduce risk factors by increasing protective factors among adolescents, and used a series of in-school and out-of-school intervention strategies including (a) teacher trainings, (b) child social and emotional skill development, and (c) parent trainings (Catalano et al., 2004). Three child and adolescent theoretical frameworks played a central role in the research including attachment theory, control theory, and the social development model, as previously discussed in the Theoretical Foundation section. The SSDP tracked 808 participants in first grade through sixth grade for more than 15 years. The majority of the assessments were conducted via interviews or questionnaires and approximately 91% of participants participated in at least 7 of the 10 data assessments over a 13-year time span (Catalano et al., 2004). The RHC study was a separate study that aimed to expand and extend the results of the SSDP and included approximately 1,047 students in first grade through third grade (Catalano et al., 2004). After ten years of data collection, approximately 91% of the research population was still involved in the study. Long-term data analysis concluded that the multiple-component strategies used to affect socializing agents within the school–which included teachers, parents, and peers–positively enhanced protective factors (e.g., social environments, school bonding, academic achievement) and reduced risky and/or problem behaviors (Catalano et al., 2004).

Academic achievement. Disengagement from school may be intensified during the middle school years (Orthner et al., 2013). School connectedness may decrease throughout adolescence (Chapman et al., 2013), leaving high school students with diminished confidence in what the educational system can provide for them (Orthner et al., 2013). Students who are not

connected to their school environment are at risk for negative outcomes, such as school truancy, failure to graduate from high school, and experiencing psychological health risks and distress (Hall-Lande et al., 2007). Socially isolated individuals in a school setting typically reject the values and beliefs of school, do not see the goals of school as important, and are not concerned with completing school or achieving academic success (Brown et al., 2003). A positive relationship exists between school connectedness and academic success (Orthner et al., 2013). Therefore, it is critical that students feel connected to their school and see their education as relevant and purposeful (Orthner et al., 2013; Wang & Dishion, 2011).

Students who have an active social learning environment, are engaged in their education, consider their schooling valuable, and are participatory in school activities have a higher likelihood of feeling connected to school, thus increasing their chances for academic achievement (Orthner et al., 2013). Schools are in a position to positively influence the social and learning environments of the classroom. Encouraging healthy peer relationships, bolstering academic and teacher support, and appropriately and fairly managing behaviors may directly influence student engagement and academic success (Orthner et al., 2013).

Statistics have shown that only three quarters of high school students complete high school within the recommended four-year period (Orthner et al., 2013). In 2012, the status dropout rate for 16 to 24-year olds in the United States was 7 % (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2014). The U.S. Department of Education NCES (2014) defined status dropout rate as "the percentage of 16 to 24-year olds who are not enrolled in school and have not earned a high school credential (either a diploma or an equivalency credential such as a General Education Development [GED] certificate)" (para. 1). However, a student in the State of Alaska that leaves school to obtain his or her GED *is*

considered a dropout student (Alaska Department of Education & Early Development [ADEED], 2013). The dropout rate in the State of Alaska measured a wider population of students, from seventh grade through twelfth grade (ADEED, 2013). In 2012 to 2013, the State of Alaska's dropout rate was 4.0 %, down from 4.8 % the previous year (Alaska Department of Education & Early Development [ADEED], 2014). Specifically in Kodiak, Alaska, the 2012 to 2013 dropout rate was 1.8 %. This rate was up from the 0.8 % dropout rate from the previous year, and the first increase in dropout rates since 2005-2006. Although the State of Alaska's dropout rate is lower than national levels, the increase in the dropout rate in Kodiak for the first time in six years is cause for concern.

Peer Connectedness

Adolescent development. Healthy peer relationships are important for social development in adolescents (Santrock, 2012) and stimulate developmentally appropriate social growth (Catalano et al., 2004; Hall-Lande et al., 2007). Peers become important for adolescents who are looking for autonomy, intimate relationships, and independence from their family structures. Peers are able to communicate on a level playing field, have egalitarian interactions with one another, and learn how to function and develop as individual people within their own cultural world (Parke & Gauvain, 2009). Regardless of whether peer circles are positive or negative, adolescents invest in friends for social and emotional support and use peer feedback for a sense of acceptance and self-worth.

Peer influences can positively or negatively affect prosocial behavior (Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011). Homophily theories–or theories that explain the tendency for people to associate or bond to other people similar to them–suggest that youth affiliate with friends who possess similar behaviors and attitudes (Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011). Students who feel

connected to school, are academically inclined, and see the goals of school as important will generally associate with friends who think and behave in a similar manner. On the contrary, students who feel alienated in school, see the goals of school as unimportant, and are not concerned with completing school will generally seek out acquaintances with similar values and priorities.

Psychological health. Social isolation–or experiencing a lack of social support from one or more close peers (Hall-Lande et al., 2007)–may be extremely painful and emotional for an adolescent. Specific psychological health risks associated with social isolation include depressive symptoms, low self-esteem, sleep disorders, feelings of hopelessness, suicidal ideation, and suicidal attempts (Hall-Lande et al., 2007; Hazler & Denham, 2002). Hall-Lande et al. (2007) examined the importance of connectedness and attachment, specifically looking at the relationship between social isolation, psychological health, and protective factors. The sample included 4,746 students in seventh grade through twelfth grade from a large Midwestern metropolitan area, and approximately half of the students were female. The sample population was 49 % White, 19.2 % Asian-American, and 19 % African-American. Primary research was gathered by the Project Eating Among Teens (EAT) surveys. The 221-item survey investigated adolescent eating patterns and health and social behaviors. In the study, social isolation was the independent variable. A simple regression model was utilized to look at how different dependent variables affected social isolation. Protective factors were also accounted for during the analysis including family connectedness, school connectedness, academic success, and a combination of the three. The statistically valid analysis revealed a positive correlation between social isolation and depressive symptoms, lower self-esteem, and higher odds of suicide attempts for both adolescent boys and girls. Feelings of family connection proved to be the strongest protective

influence against suicide attempts and social isolation. Family connectedness was also a significant piece of healthy adolescent development, dispelling the myth that adolescents fare better as autonomous young adults. The study highlighted the importance of cultivating adolescent relationships to protect against social isolation, and it provided pertinent information regarding healthy adolescent development (Hall-Lande et al., 2007).

The process of adolescent change can be emotionally uncomfortable for youth (Schulz, 2011) and adolescents oftentimes magnify social and personal situations (Hazler & Denham, 2002). Families, schools, and peers are three of the most influential factors that contribute to adolescent health, and positive peer relationships may be one of the most stabilizing components of future psychological health (Hall-Lande et al., 2007). Although adolescents may want autonomy, they are also reliant upon strong social support (Hall-Lande et al., 2007; Roybal et al., 2014). Attachment relationships can develop with mothers, fathers, siblings, peers, and many other individuals, all of which are highly influential in determining risk-taking behaviors (Parke & Gauvain, 2009). Individual and social relationships that are reliable, responsive, and challenging can form secure attachments. Relationships that display the aforementioned characteristics build secure attachments for children, promote positive self-esteem, and encourage healthy social relationships and appropriate cognitive growth. Relationships that are avoidant, resistant, and disorganized can result in insecure attachments for children (Parke & Gauvain, 2009). Insecure attachments can result in emotional insecurity, poor self-concept, and lower cognitive achievements.

Adolescents struggling with social isolation feel lonely and have lower levels of self-worth. Additionally, poor perceptions of positive relationships with family and friends have been associated with suicidal ideation and attempts (Hall-Lande et al., 2007). Isolation can lead to

feelings of marginalization and unacceptability, which are also key factors in increasing the risk of suicidal behaviors (Hazler & Denham, 2002). Increasing school and peer connectedness and decreasing social isolation may positively affect school truancy and dropout rates, and diminish negative psychological factors (Brown et al., 2003; Hall-Lande et al., 2007).

Protective factors. Schools provide adolescents with the opportunity to be academically and socially successful (Hall-Lande et al., 2007). César and Santos (2006) focused on collaborative work and its association with academic learning and adolescent development. The authors conducted their research as part of the ongoing project called the *Interaction and Knowledge* project using ethnographic research methods. The study included 33 eighth and ninth grade teachers/researchers and their students, as well as school psychologists (César & Santos, 2006). The aim of the study was to determine if collaborative work created inclusive learning environments, and if inclusive learning environments stimulated student developmental competencies (i.e., social, cognitive, or affective competence). Both teachers and school psychologists implemented components that promoted collaborative work in the classroom setting for an entire school year, such as increasing peer interactions through groups and dyads. The framework for the research was based off a historical cultural approach, or a Vygotskian theoretical framework. Empirical evidence was substantiated by research collected through participant observation; digital photos; questionnaires; interviews; and other tasks, documents, and reports (César & Santos, 2006). The results showed a positive correlation between collaborative work environments and positive attitudes towards academics and learning, and promoting healthy social, cognitive, and affective development (César & Santos, 2006). Implications derived from this study further promote the importance of establishing inclusive, collaborative school settings to increase peer and school connectedness.

Students who have educational goals and are actively engaged in their educational process are more resilient and experience greater positive outcomes like school completion. On the contrary, students with low academic achievement are at risk for a variety of factors, including substance abuse, violence, and emotional distress. School connectedness has been shown to significantly reduce "levels of psychological problems, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, violent behavior, substance use, sexual behaviors, and peer harassment" (Hall-Lande et al., 2007, p. 269). According to Hall-Lande et al. (2007), academic achievement and school connectedness serve as potential protective factors for adolescents experiencing social isolation. Strong relationships at school can increase school connection and motivation, and may have a positive influence on students that lasts a lifetime. Furthermore, strong school connectedness is associated with safer behaviors, higher academic achievement, healthy outcomes, and extracurricular involvement.

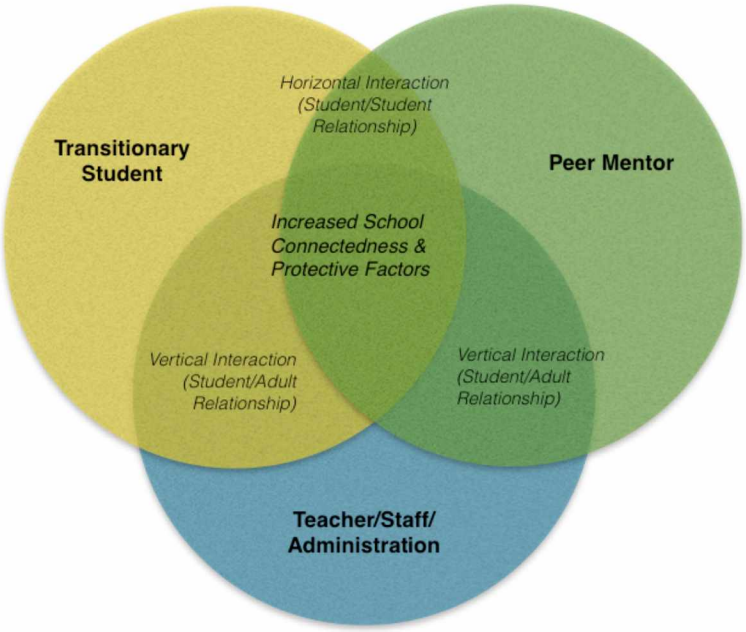
Chapman et al. (2013) further discuss school connectedness as an important protective factor and its negative association with risk-taking behaviors for adolescents. The authors conducted a systematic literature review on fourteen school-based prevention and intervention programs that targeted high-risk students and evaluated the association between school connectedness and risk-taking behaviors. In their review, the independent variable was the fourteen school-based programs; the mediating variables–which influence the dependent variables–were school connectedness, bonding, and engagement; and the dependent variable was risky behaviors. After reviewing the various school-based programs, Chapman and colleagues established that school connectedness was a key protective factor in school retention, emotional health, and well-being, and that schools are in a unique position to help foster school connectedness to reduce risk-taking behaviors.

In their study, Chapman et al. (2013) emphasize how school connectedness has been associated with motivation and academic achievement, healthy social and emotional development, and reduced risk-taking behaviors. Furthermore, adolescents who feel connected to school have a lower probability of partaking in unsafe behaviors later in adolescence (Chapman et al., 2013). Increasing protective factors (e.g., school connectedness) not only directly affects adolescent behaviors within the school environment, but also beyond the school environment as well. Chapman and colleagues state that students who feel connected to their school environment are less likely to partake in (a) transport-related precarious behaviors, like riding in a car with a drunk driver or underage driving; (b) risk-taking behaviors that extend beyond the school setting; and (c) dangerous activities later on in adolescence.

Peer Mentoring Programs for Secondary Education

According to the literature, there is a need for school-based mentoring programs that work to increase social environments, school connectedness, and academic success for secondary students. Social environments–such as peer activities, peer acceptance, and physical appearance–become increasingly important to adolescents (Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006) and may determine how bonded an adolescent is to his or her surroundings, influencing prosocial or antisocial behavior (Catalano et al., 2004). As mentioned earlier in the Theoretical Foundations section, certain factors within a school have been theorized to support prosocial behavior, such as valuing both horizontal interactions between student/student or teacher/teacher, and vertical interactions between student/teacher (César & Santos, 2006). In a school-based mentoring program, the primary objective is to build school connectedness and protective factors for students by increasing both horizontal and vertical interactions (see Diagram 1).

Diagram 1. Graphic representation of proposed school-based mentor program



Note. Diagram 1 was constructed by the author to visually show horizontal and vertical interactions between (a) the student in need/transitioning student; (b) the student peer mentor; and (c) secondary teachers, staff, and administration.

Formal school mentoring programs have gained popularity as a way to build school and peer connectedness, support healthy adolescent development, and serve as a protective factor for school-aged individuals (Dubois & Karcher, 2005). Focused school-based mentoring programs–such as a peer-mentoring program for transitioning high school students–can target school connectedness, promote social bonding, and foster a sense of belonging, all of which may reduce risk-taking behaviors (Chapman et al., 2013). These key findings implicate the unique situation secondary schools are in to develop focused prevention and intervention programs that aim to encourage school connectedness, peer relationships, healthy adult relationships, and academic achievement among its adolescent youth.

Peer-mentoring program models. Saito and Blythe developed the first empirically informed typologies of mentoring programs (DuBois & Karcher, 2005). Saito and Blythe grouped one-on-one mentoring programs according to the configuration of the relationship, location of the program, length of the program, and infrastructure of the program. The original group-mentoring program typologies were broken down into two categories, including site-based and community-based programs. The data Saito and Blythe used to analyze the typologies of mentoring programs was substantial; however, the Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies accounted for the majority of the program data, leaving other types of peer mentoring program typologies–including peer mentoring program designs–underrepresented (DuBois & Karcher, 2005).

Current academic literature has been produced to account for such underrepresented program typologies and to facilitate learning across a multitude of mentoring programs (DuBois & Karcher, 2005). Scholarly journals have increased publications to help further substantiate the theory and research behind mentoring programs, and organizations such as MENTOR (2009) have made a wealth of information accessible to individuals and groups interested in implementing effective peer-mentoring programs. MENTOR is a national leader in connecting America's children and adolescents with mentoring services. In 2009, MENTOR published its third edition of *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring* (see Appendix A). The two-part manual is a sufficient resource for those interested in guaranteeing that mentoring relationships thrive and continue to meet the needs of the young people they serve. The first part of the MENTOR manual lists evidenced-based operational standards for mentoring programs, and the second part outlines varying program designs and planning, as well as context on program management and program evaluation.

To better understand peer-mentoring program models for secondary students transitioning to a new high school, five recent academic resources were reviewed. Each of the academic resources presents a comprehensive culmination of theory, research, or practice in the field of youth mentoring. The five academic resources include:

- *Developing an Effective Transition Program for Students Entering Middle School or High School* by Cauley and Jovanovich (2006);
- *Handbook of Youth Mentoring* edited by DuBois and Karcher (2005);
- *Building Effective Peer Mentoring Programs in Schools: An Introductory Guide* by Garringer and MacRae (2008);
- *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring* by MENTOR (2009);
- *Effective Ninth-Grade Transition Programs Can Promote Student Success* by Roybal et al. (2014).

Cauley and Jovanovich (2006) and Roybal et al. (2014) are commonly cited references for effective transition programs for adolescent students. DuBois and Karcher (2005) gathered information from leading experts in the field of youth mentoring to provide one of the strongest resources for people interested in examining the fundamental dimensions of youth mentoring. Lastly, Garringer and MacRae (2008) and MENTOR (2009) present published manuals on building effective peer mentoring programs that are supported by Mentoring.org; the Mentoring Resource Center; and the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools.

In the *Handbook of Youth Mentoring*, DuBois and Karcher (2005) used a visual model of youth mentoring to illustrate how positive mentoring relationships have the potential to positively impact outcomes for mentees. The model depicts mentoring partnerships that are founded upon a concrete mentoring relationship between the mentee and mentor, as well as trust,

empathy, and mutuality. Many types of mentoring relationships exist, including group mentoring (adult mentor to several youth), team mentoring (several adult mentors to several youth), traditional mentoring (one adult mentor to one youth), or peer mentoring (youth mentor to youth) (DuBois & Karcher, 2005). The picture of youth mentoring draws upon three areas of development that mentoring relationships should focus on to produce positive outcomes for the youth mentees, including (a) social-emotional development, (b) cognitive development, and (c) identity development. The mediator, parental and peer relationships, and moderating factors such as interpersonal history, social competencies, and developmental stages also largely influence a mentee's positive outcome. According to the model, mentoring programs that foster personal developmental growth in any one of the aforementioned areas are most likely to have the greatest impact on youth, such as an increase in academic achievement, emotional well-being, and expressing positive behaviors (DuBois & Karcher, 2005).

Culturally responsive peer-mentoring programs. According to Cauley and Jovanovich (2006) more students fail the ninth grade than any other grade, and economically disadvantaged and minority students are twice as likely to be held back. Sue and Sue (2013) list a number of empirically supported variables that are essential for effective multicultural relationships, including a strong therapeutic alliance, cohesion in a group setting, empathy, collaboration, positive regard, and genuineness. Programs that work to facilitate student connectedness have been shown to increase academic benefits for minority students (Roybal et al., 2014). In particular, a negative correlation was found between Hispanic students who felt as though they belonged to their school and absenteeism. Although this association may also be true for most students, a greater benefit was associated with economically disadvantaged students whose belongingness needs were being met during the school day (Roybal et al., 2014).

Mohatt, Fok, Burket, Henry, and Allen (2011) explored the relationship between cultural connectedness and risky behaviors for Alaska Native youth. The Native American population is defined as holistic and connected. Central cultural elements for Alaska Natives include close relationships with individuals and family members, and being interconnected with the community and the environment. Educational programs that are aware of a populations' sense of connectedness and respect fundamental cultural values may help protect against deviant behavior and poor psychological health (Mohatt et al., 2011). Peer-mentoring programs that underscore cultural connectedness as a protective factor can be likened back to Vygotsky's theory, which argued the importance of authentic interactions within a person's cultural world (Parke & Gauvain, 2009). School-based peer-mentoring programs that emphasize connectedness, unconditional positive regard, understanding, and a sense of belongingness are in a position to promote protective factors and support minority students transitioning to a new school (Mohatt et al., 2011; Roybal et al., 2014; Sue & Sue, 2013).

Transition programs. Roybal and colleagues (2014) examined effective transition programs that promote student success. The purpose of the study was to review research and recommendations regarding transition programs, and outline effective transition programs schools may implement to facilitate student success from primary school to secondary school. The authors reviewed primary data pertaining to six areas related to secondary school transitions, including connection to school, the role of educators, ninth grade transition programs, small learning communities, peer support programs, and academic skills classes. For each one of the aforementioned areas, Roybal et al. recommended specific components useful in effective transition programs and systems. Schools that use current, academic literature to design and

implement formal school mentoring programs are in a position to facilitate healthy adolescent development and increase protective factors for school-aged individuals.

Building a school-based peer-mentoring program for secondary students transitioning to a new high school. Current literature on evidenced-based mentoring programs has established guidelines and standards useful in building a school-based peer-mentoring program for secondary students transitioning to a new high school (Garringer & MacRae, 2008; MENTOR, 2009). *Building Effective Peer Mentoring Programs in School: An Introductory Guide*, authored by Garringer and MacRae (2008), is a primary resource that discusses the factors for structuring and implementing an effective peer-mentoring program in schools. The guide was published by the Mentoring Resource Center in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools.

Garringer and MacRae (2008) examined considerations for peer mentoring program designs. The authors contend that peer-mentoring programs must have a focus (e.g., procedural, academic, or social mentoring) and the type of mentoring model must be a good fit to meet the organization's goals and objectives. For instance, a school may decide to implement a cross-age peer-mentoring program (where an older peer mentors a younger peer) versus a standard peer-mentoring program (where a peer mentors a same-age peer) (Garringer & MacRae, 2008). Program stakeholders are vital in developing formal policies, managing program operations, and ensuring that the program is running effectively and smoothly. Program stakeholders include the site coordinator, teachers, counselors, school administrators, and other adult leaders (Garringer & MacRae, 2008). Both the program stakeholders and the site coordinator are responsible for developing a financial plan that determines the amount of funding needed to develop and sustain a program. Afterwards, both parties are accountable for finding and applying for diversified

funding, and implementing a system for managing the program's finances (MENTOR, 2009). The site coordinator oversees the crux of program management, which encompasses the recruitment of mentors, mentees, and other volunteers; screening and training the mentors; developing training opportunities for mentors; organizing events to introduce peer mentors to new students; and supporting and monitoring the youth involved in the program (MENTOR, 2009).

Garringer and MacRae (2008) provide information on recruiting youth to be mentors, screening potential mentors, and recruiting mentees. Recruitment campaigns help target potential youth mentors while advertising (a) the goals and objectives of the program, and (b) the criteria requirements for peer mentors. Garringer and MacRae recommend that individuals who are recruited as peer mentors: display a high level of social interest; consistently attend school and pass their classes; demonstrate personal stability; are effective communicators; are from a specific target population; and have a skill that would enhance a peer partnership (i.e., speaking a second language). Once potential youth mentors have been recruited, screening procedures should continue to reflect the goals of the program. For instance, organizations may require that potential youth mentors provide an application, personal statement, references, or recommendations. School adults or system referrals (e.g., new student applications) may refer mentees to the peer-mentoring program once the focus of the peer-mentoring program has been decided (Garringer & MacRae, 2008).

Training opportunities to learn the basic knowledge and skills needed to build an effective mentoring relationship is recommended for student mentors (MENTOR, 2009). The standards for training in the MENTOR (2009) resource manual outlines two benchmarks for mentor training. The first benchmark states peer mentors should undergo a minimum of two

hours of pre-match, in-person training. The second benchmark summarizes mentoring training topics, including: program rules, establishing mentor goals and expectations for the mentor/mentee relationship, outlining mentor obligations and appropriate roles, learning how to develop and maintain relationships, becoming educated in ethical issues that may arise during the mentoring relationship, effectively closing a mentoring relationship, and determining where to find available support when needed.

Garringer and MacRae (2008) developed guiding principles for training youth mentors, planning training programs for youth mentors, and building training agendas. The authors suggested using shorter activities to train peer mentors that are no longer than 30 to 50 minutes per lesson, and include a variety of activities and approaches, such as lectures, small-group exercises, and discussion opportunities (Garringer & MacRae, 2008). Ongoing youth training opportunities are essential; trainings reinforce key concepts and new material keeps the trainings interesting. Garringer and MacRae provide a list of print resources available for orientations and trainings for peer mentors. Some of the listed resources have information that can be converted directly into handouts or slides, and other resources provide ready-to-use training materials, assignments, and individual or group activity prompts.

The fourth and final section of the peer-mentoring guide by Garringer and MacRae (2008) reviews mentoring activities that nurture the mentor-mentee relationship. Both the peer mentors and mentees benefit from peer-mentoring programs (Garringer & MacRae, 2008). For mentors, peer mentoring may improve connectedness to school, self-esteem, empathy, communication and conflict resolution skills, and relationships with parents. For mentees, peer mentoring may positively influence school and peer connectedness, feelings of self-efficacy, academic achievement, and prosocial behaviors and attitudes. Weekly, one-hour meetings on

campus (e.g., library or cafeteria) are sufficient in building mentor/mentee relationships (DuBois & Karcher, 2005; Herrera et al., 2011). Garringer and MacRae (2008) list numerous activities that align with different peer-mentoring focuses, such as academic mentoring activities, personal growth mentoring activities, and mentoring activities that may be used just for fun. The authors also offer peer-mentoring activities suitable for group and individual peer mentoring activities and conclude the introductory peer-mentoring guide with additional references, readings, and peer-mentoring resources.

Procedural, social, and academic challenges and interventions. According to Cauley and Jovanovich (2006), transitioning students may face procedural, social, and academic challenges when moving to a new school. Procedural concerns encompass anxieties about changes in school climate and size, different school rules and policies, and changes in school procedures. Social concerns deal with peer and teacher relationships, acceptance, and safety. Academic challenges include schoolwork expectations, navigating teacher personalities and teaching styles, and learning how to succeed academically in a new school climate. For each of the three challenge areas, Cauley and Jovanovich (2006) list strategies and interventions that may help to diminish stressors for each particular issue.

Procedural challenges and interventions. Students entering a new school may experience anxiety about getting around the school; not knowing where their classes are located; and finding commonly used landmarks, like bathrooms, the library, and the gymnasium (Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006). Other procedural concerns transitioning students may face include finding their lockers and remembering their combinations, whether or not they are prepared for class with the right books and materials, and where they can go if they need assistance (e.g., main office and Counseling Department).

Two main ways to foster a smooth transition for students facing procedural challenges include (a) introducing school procedures to new students during the spring before students enter high school, and (b) providing ongoing support to new students about new school procedures throughout the first quarter and school year (Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006). Peer mentoring programs may invite students to visit the school for a school tour before the start of the school year. New students may also be invited to a new-student orientation where they have a chance to meet school peers and learn about the school climate. The week prior to school beginning, peer mentors can host a "Locker Night" where new students find their locker and test their locker combination. Throughout the course of the first week, mentors can help distribute student handbooks to new students and be posted throughout the school during passing periods to assist with the bell schedule, lunch procedures, and finding teacher classrooms. During the school year, peer mentors can provide ongoing support to new students with check-ins to make sure their procedural needs are being met.

Social challenges and interventions. Healthy peer relationships are an essential part of adolescent development (Brown et al., 2003). Peer connectedness is an important part of social and cultural development, building egalitarian interactions with one another, and learning how to function and develop as individual people as well as within a group (Brown et al., 2003). Unknown peer and teacher relationships, departmentalization or the formation of group cliques among peers, normative developmental changes such as puberty and socioemotional development, and peer acceptance are all components that may create social apprehension for students entering a new high school (Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006). School-based peer-mentoring programs can aim to help students with social concerns before entry and at their new school in an effort to lessen the stress related to social challenges.

Cauley and Jovanovich (2006) list a number of intervention strategies peer mentors may use to support new students facing social challenges. The authors emphasize that activities related to alleviating social concerns for new students can take place as early as the spring before the transition or during the summer when students move to a new area. Activities to relieve social anxieties may include sending letters home to new students welcoming them to school and inviting them to a new student orientation; organizing a picnic meet-and-greet with administrators, teachers, school counselors, and peer mentors; or planning smaller, grade level groups for new students prior to the start of school (Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006). At the beginning of the school year, peer mentors are encouraged to organize a forum between new students and returning students to answer questions, dispel myths about the school environment, and form interactions between students. Cauley and Jovanovich suggest hosting the forum in a panel format comprised of freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior students. Other events peer mentors may host throughout the course of the year are a Spring Social (Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006) or a cocurricular fair that encourages students to get involved with cocurricular activities. Sheila Beardsley, a school counselor in the State of Alaska for 16 years and past president of the Alaska School Counseling Association, described a "Club Rush" as an example of a cocurricular activity (S. Beardsley, personal communication, January, 2015). A Club Rush may be organized at the beginning of each semester and used as an opportunity for (a) incoming freshman, (b) new students, and (c) current students to learn about different school clubs, such as the mission of the club, when the club meets, and where the club meets. Then, students may "rush" different clubs they are interested in joining.

Academic challenges and interventions. Researchers have theorized that adolescents see a decline in academic motivation because of the intense nature of competitive school environments

and social comparison when secondary students are going through a time of heightened self-consciousness (Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006). High schools establish strict policies and rules taking away opportunities for students to make decisions when the desire for autonomy is most significant, and it is not uncommon for adolescents who are transitioning to a new middle school or high school to experience a decline in intrinsic motivation, academic self-concept, and interest in school and grades (Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006).

Cauley and Jovanovich (2006) pinpoint several ways to promote academic motivation and connectedness for transitioning students including (a) helping the student understand the scope of work at the high school level, and (b) assisting students who are struggling academically. Peer-mentors can help prepare informative spring sessions for transitioning students to ease academic anxiety (Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006). Spring activities to alleviate academic stressors may include organizing school visits to shadow students at the high school level; providing information about graduation credit requirements, academic programs, and offered courses; and having an open house for students to visit the Counseling Department and teacher classrooms to meet school staff (Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006). Peer mentors may also help prepare fall activities for transitioning students. Such activities may include inviting teachers to talk about classroom and academic expectations or offering Lunch-and-Learns about how to stay organized or how to study effectively. Peer-mentoring programs also play an important role in supporting new students who are struggling academically with guidance and direction. Youth leaders are in a position to recommend academic assistance programs, like before school or after school tutoring programs (Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006).

Program implementation challenges. Program challenges are natural when building a new school-based peer-mentoring program. Recruiting and training peer mentors are some of the

most crucial barriers to overcome (MENTOR 2009; Minor, 2007). Eligibility standards and screening processes are important to set for anyone wishing to participate in the peer-mentoring program. The site coordinator or other school personnel will have to agree on both the eligibility criteria and screening protocol for all potential youth mentors, as well as conduct the recruiting process. Formal screenings may include reviewing applications, conducting interviews, or holding orientations (MENTOR, 2009). Once selected as a peer mentor, youth may experience a heightened sense of power. Therefore, choosing peer mentors who will encourage healthy, prosocial behaviors is paramount, as high school mentors have the potential to be highly influential on peer mentees. Lastly, it is important that training opportunities reiterate the peer mentor roles, expectations, and what can be achieved through a peer-to-peer partnership.

Training peer mentors is an essential piece of the program's operations (Garringer & MacRae, 2008). The site coordinator is tasked with providing ongoing support, supervision, and training opportunities for program participants. Training helps to continuously build relationships and mentoring skills, provides support and structure, and keeps the students engaged in mentoring activities. Site coordinators are encouraged to provide peer mentors with access to a variety of resources to help mentors negotiate challenges in mentoring relationships (MENTOR, 2009). A variety of educational resources exist (e.g., expert speakers, publications, Webinars, publications, etc.) and the site coordinator is in a position to determine which training materials are appropriate for its mentors and mentees. Students and adults who are working in a mentoring capacity must be prepared to work effectively with other youth, resolve issues, and appropriately handle crises (Garringer & MacRae, 2008). Furthermore, all participants should be well versed in emergency preparedness and cognizant of specific emergency procedures for their school site.

A school-based peer-mentoring program requires staff and faculty time (Minor, 2007), and the site coordinator plays a critical role in implementing and overseeing a well-run mentoring program (Garringer & MacRae, 2008). The site coordinator will most likely spend valuable time organizing training opportunities, providing appropriate guidance and supervision to the program's mentors, managing the program's finances, and consistently evaluating the program's success (MENTOR, 2009). Mentoring programs should consider how to compensate adult supervisors for their time, as well how to cover the costs associated with day-to-day program operations (e.g., training costs, food, advertising materials, venue expenses) (Minor, 2007).

Lastly, school-based peer-mentoring programs should consider different viewpoints and opinions that may negatively or positively affect the program's outcomes (Minor, 2007). For instance, the site coordinator–along with the program's key stakeholders–should all agree upon how the program will be evaluated for effectiveness and success. The program must also clearly define its mission; purpose; and the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of all of the team members (MENTOR, 2009). Institutional and program support are vital (DuBouis & Karcher, 2005). Adequate school support ensures that the program will receive the necessary resources to maintain functioning and will incorporate a system to monitor and evaluate program success.

Application

The research project focuses on secondary students transitioning from (a) middle school to high school or (b) a new high school. The first part of the project consists of a presentation created to educate middle school and high school educational teams about the need for peer-mentoring programs that specifically targets school connectedness and increasing protective factors for secondary students (see Appendix B). The second part of the project includes a unique

document that takes components from published literature on effective mentoring programs and outlines steps and procedures needed to establish and maintain a functional school-based mentor program for transitioning secondary students, hereinafter referred to as *applicable program guide* (see Appendix C). Both the presentation and the applicable program guide are original pieces of work constructed from a variety of literature reviews, and focus on building school connectedness, increasing social connectedness, and alleviating anxieties about transitioning to a new school for secondary students.

School Connectedness and Peer Mentoring Presentation

The primary audience for the proposed presentation (see Appendix B) is secondary administration and staff members. The presentation objective is to provide a working knowledge about the importance of building school and peer connectedness for adolescents. The presentation will outline the research discussed in the previous Literature Review section and the growing need for school-based peer-mentoring programs to increase school connectedness as a protective factor for students, especially for those students transitioning from (a) eighth grade to ninth grade, or (b) a new high school.

Applicable Program Guide

The primary audience for the applicable program guide (see Appendix C) includes (a) the student in need/transitioning student; (b) the student peer mentor; and (c) secondary teachers, staff, and administration (refer to Diagram 1, p. 25). The main objective for the applicable program guide is to offer a resource for secondary administration and staff members that outlines the components and steps needed to establish a school-based peer-mentoring program that aims to increase school connectedness and enhance peer relationships for transitioning secondary students. The program structure in the applicable program guide is for a school-based peer-

mentoring program for secondary students transitioning to a new high school that begins before the first day of school (i.e., at new student orientation) and lasts for the nine-month school year. The program has been constructed as a stand-alone program because the Kodiak Island Borough School District does not currently have an existing peer-mentoring program. The nature of the peer-mentoring program addresses procedural, social, and academic challenges new students may face while transitioning to a new high school. A "kit program"–or a pre-existing school-based peer-mentoring program for secondary students–was not used for the applicable program guide because typical kit programs were not conducive to peer-to-peer mentoring (e.g., supported traditional adult-to-student mentoring), the intensity was unattainable (e.g., weekly one-on-one meetings with an adult outside of school for an entire school year), or the program was community-based (versus school-based).

Conclusion

Schools that understand the lasting and potentially devastating effects of student alienation can work to increase protective factors, such as increasing school connectedness and fostering healthy peer relationships (Brown et al., 2003). Teachers, parents, and peers are all in a special position to positively enhance school bonding and peer and family connectedness. Schools are important socializing institutions and can optimistically influence adolescent development, especially if the child feels connected to his or her school environment. Adequate school connectedness and peer relationships may: promote positive attachments that results in an adolescent's resiliency, deepen bonds to school connectedness, and foster successful transitions from primary school to secondary school (Catalano et al., 2004; César & Santos, 2006; Hall-Lande et al., 2007; Roybal et al., 2014). Research has highlighted the importance of peer

relationships in increasing school connectedness, preventing social isolation, and serving as protective factors in adolescent development.

Establishing a school-based peer-mentoring program at the high school level has the potential to have lasting positive outcomes for both the mentors and the transitioning students (Garringer & MacRae, 2008). Although the research is less extensive on the benefits of peer mentoring programs, key findings suggest that school-based peer-mentoring programs do improve feelings of school and peer connectedness (Garringer & MacRae, 2008). In addition, students who have worked with peer mentors show a positive impact on competency, self-efficacy, academic achievement, and prosocial behaviors. Peer mentors also report positive improvements in self-esteem, the ability to empathize with others, honing in on interpersonal communication and conflict resolution skills, and having improved relationships with their parents (Garringer & MacRae, 2008). In conclusion, implementing a school-based peer-mentoring program that targets school and peer connectedness may be a critical component in contributing to healthy adolescent development, increasing protective factors, and reducing the risk of problem behaviors.

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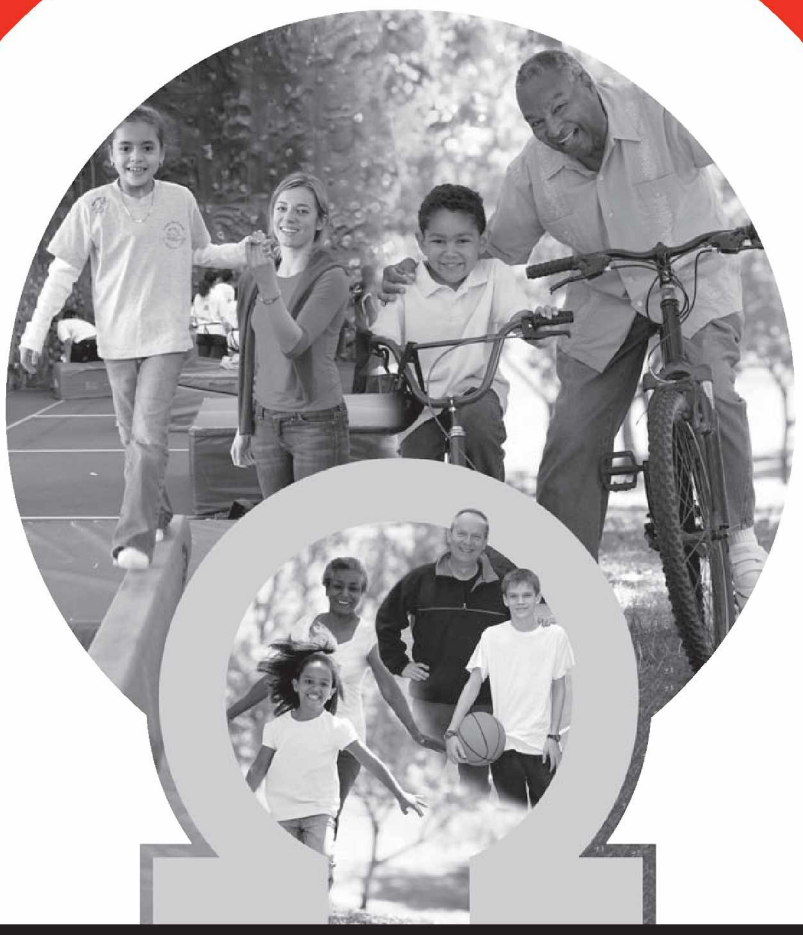
Appendix A

3rd Edition

Elements *of* Effective Practice for Mentoring™

Newly revised edition, which includes evidenced-based operational standards



MENTOR.

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Appendix A

Introduction

As a strategy for helping young people succeed in school, work and life, mentoring works. It helps give young people the confidence, resources and support they need to achieve their potential. But, the fact is this: these positive outcomes are only possible when young people are engaged in high-quality mentoring relationships.

The *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring* holds the key to success in producing high-quality relationships. The new edition of the *Elements* provides six evidence-based standards for practice that incorporate the latest research and best-available practice wisdom. It also reprises advice that appeared in earlier editions on program design and planning; program management; program operations; and program evaluation.

We believe adherence to the *Elements* will ensure that mentoring relationships thrive and endure. They include measures that any mentoring program in any setting can implement, as well as measures that any agency can incorporate within the mentoring element of broad-based, positive youth development programming. This means that community-based, corporate-based, school-based, faith-based and Internet-based mentoring programs can use the *Elements* to meet the specific needs of the young people they serve and the milieu in which they operate. And, it means that afterschool and other positive youth development programs which embed mentoring within their programming will find the *Elements* equally useful and adaptable.

These new guidelines are the culmination of a process that, once again, brought together the nation's foremost authorities on mentoring. The leaders are recognized in the Acknowledgments section. We thank each and every one of them for their invaluable counsel and dedication to making mentoring the kind of experience it should be for children.

For additional details about the research that underpins these guidelines or to learn more about approaches to implementing them, please visit www.mentoring.org. Finally, there will undoubtedly be a fourth edition of the *Elements*, so your feedback and suggestions are welcome. Meanwhile, we thank you for your interest and for continuing to help raise the bar as we all work to expand the world of quality mentoring.

In partnership,

Tonya T. Wiley
Chief Administrative Officer

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This edition of the *Elements* is divided into two parts:

Part I: Operational Standards for Mentoring Programs *(or mentoring embedded into larger, positive youth development programming, like afterschool programs)*

Part II: Program Design and Planning, Management and Evaluation

Part I offers six evidence-based **standards** that address six critical dimensions of mentoring program operations: 1) recruitment; 2) screening; 3) training; 4) matching; 5) monitoring and support; and 6) closure. For each standard, specific **benchmarks** are advanced, along with research-based **justifications**. Together, the standards and benchmarks provide practical guidance on how best to approach the provision of high-quality mentoring in day-to-day operations — whether in a stand-alone mentoring program or a positive youth development program in which mentoring is one element. In addition, **enhancements**, based principally on the wisdom of outstanding practitioners, are offered for readers' consideration and use.

Part II provides equally practical advice regarding how to build a new mentoring program or strengthen an existing one. It focuses on program design and planning; program management; and program evaluation. The **program design and planning** section includes guidelines you can use to launch an effective new mentoring initiative. The section on **program management** focuses on what needs to be done to ensure that a mentoring program operates within a strong organizational context, no matter what the precise setting — which will continue to vary widely. The section on **program evaluation** imparts basic guidelines on how to prepare for and support this important function.

Finally, to review and adapt the operational standards and/or make use of advice regarding program planning, management, operations and evaluation, please check out two additional resources. First, meet with your local *Mentoring Partnership* (They now operate in 25 states and are one-stop sites for information about quality mentoring practice. See www.mentoring.org/find_resources/state_partnerships/ for listings.). Second, please visit www.mentoring.org, the nation's most comprehensive resource for mentors and mentoring initiatives nationwide.

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Part I:

Operational Standards for Mentoring Programs

Standard 1: Recruitment

Standard: Recruit appropriate mentors and mentees by realistically describing the program's aims and expected outcomes.

Benchmarks:

Mentor Recruitment

B.1.1 Program engages in recruitment strategies that realistically portray the benefits, practices and challenges of mentoring in the program.

Mentee Recruitment

B.1.2 Program recruits youth whose needs best match the services offered by the program and helps them understand what mentoring is and what they can expect from a mentoring relationship.

Enhancements:

Mentor Recruitment

E.1.1 Program has a written statement outlining eligibility requirements for mentors in its program.

Mentee Recruitment

E.1.2 Program has a written statement outlining eligibility requirements for mentees in its program.

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Justification for Recruitment Benchmarks:

Mentors' unfulfilled expectations can contribute to an earlier-than-expected ending of mentoring relationships.[1] Thus, it is important for programs to realistically describe both the rewards and challenges of mentoring when recruiting mentors. When imagined outcomes are not immediately realized or take a different form than what was originally expected, mentors may decide that the relationship does not meet their needs, and, consequently, they may end the match prematurely. Thus, when recruiting potential mentors, it is important to set realistic expectations regarding a mentoring relationship and what it can achieve. Practically speaking, one way to set realistic expectations for a prospective mentor is to provide him or her with written eligibility requirements.

Also, mentees frequently report not knowing what to expect from a mentoring program and/or in a mentoring relationship.[1] Therefore, when mentees are recruited for participation in a mentoring program, it is important to provide them with information about what mentoring is and how it can be helpful to them. Program staff should also inquire about prospective mentees' expectations about being mentored and about the mentoring program. In this way, program staff can help prospective mentees develop both positive and realistic expectations.

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Standard 2: Screening

Standard: Screen prospective mentors to determine whether they have the time, commitment and personal qualities to be an effective mentor.

Benchmarks:

Mentor Screening

B.2.1 Mentor completes an application.

B.2.2 Mentor agrees to a one (calendar or school) year minimum commitment for the mentoring relationship.

B.2.3 Mentor agrees to participate in face-to-face meetings with his or her mentee that average one time per week and one hour per meeting over the course of a calendar or school year.*

*This benchmark may be addressed differently as long as there is evidence to support that the variation is associated with positive outcomes for mentees (e.g., combining in-person meetings with online communication or telephone calls; meeting almost exclusively online; meeting less frequently than once a week, with each meeting lasting for more than an hour, on average). As a general rule, programs should aim to either meet this benchmark or provide a clear rationale for doing otherwise. (See justification for additional comments on this topic.)

B.2.4 Program conducts at least one face-to-face interview with mentor.

B.2.5 Program conducts a reference check (personal and/or professional) on mentor.

B.2.6 Program conducts a comprehensive criminal background check on adult mentor, including searching a national criminal records database along with sex offender and child abuse registries.

Mentee Screening

B.2.7 Parent(s)/guardian(s) complete an application and provide informed consent for their child to participate.

B.2.8 Parent(s)/guardian(s) and mentee agree to a one (calendar or school) year minimum commitment for the mentoring relationship.

B.2.9 Parents(s)/guardian(s) and mentee agree that the mentee will participate in face-to-face meetings with his or her mentor a minimum of one time per week, on average, for a minimum of one hour per meeting, on average.

Enhancements:

E.2.1 Program utilizes national, fingerprint-based FBI criminal background checks (e.g., the SafetyNET system operating under the auspices of the Child Protection Improvements Act, in cooperation with the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children).

E.2.2 School-based programs assess mentor's interest in maintaining contact with mentee during the summer months following the close of the school year and offer assistance with maintaining contact.

Justification for Screening Benchmarks:

Screening practices, including face-to-face interviews with prospective mentors, as well as reference and background checks, are recommended as a guideline across a wide range of mentoring programs.[1,2] Reference checks are also essential for assessing the suitability of the prospective mentor for a mentoring relationship. More specifically, criminal background checks are a necessary component of screening prospective mentors and must be conducted before initiating any contact between the mentor and the mentee. The check provides a concrete method for mentoring programs to enhance the likelihood that the mentee will be protected and safe with his or her mentor.

Analyses indicate that it is important to gain access to records from national and not just state registries because criminals move, and one state registry alone may not provide a complete picture of an individual's criminal history. The SafetyNET criminal background check system employs a fingerprint-based system that relies on nationwide records available through the FBI. Findings indicate that SafetyNET provides the best available protection against those who may have a record of serious crimes against children in one state and then apply to be a mentor in another state.[3]

Mentor and Mentee Commitment

Longer-term mentoring relationships are associated with more benefits to youth than shorter-term relationships. Evidence for the importance of relationship duration has emerged from studies of community- and school-based models of volunteer youth mentoring.[4,5,6,7,8] For example, adolescents who participated in a relationship that lasted at least 12 months had more positive benefits as compared to youth in relationships that lasted fewer than 12 months.[4] In addition, prematurely ending a match may result in negative child outcomes.[4, 9] Taken together, these studies establish the importance of mentoring relationships lasting for at least one

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academic or calendar year. What may eventually emerge as the dominant influence on effects related to program duration is whether relationships are continued for the full duration of the established expectations, even if these are for a shorter period of time than one calendar year.[10] However, the current evidence suggests that longer is better and that programs that last less than one year generally produce less potent outcomes.

In addition to relationship length, the frequency of contact between mentor and mentee has also been linked to positive youth outcomes. Frequent, regular contact provides more opportunities to develop a close relationship by engaging in shared activities and providing ongoing social and emotional support.[7,11,12]

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Standard 3: Training

Standard: Train prospective mentors in the basic knowledge and skills needed to build an effective mentoring relationship.

Benchmarks:

Mentor Training

B.3.1 Program provides a minimum of two hours of pre-match, in-person training.

B.3.2 Mentor training includes the following topics, at a minimum:
a. Program rules;
b. Mentors' goals and expectations for the mentor/mentee relationship;
c. Mentors' obligations and appropriate roles;
d. Relationship development and maintenance;
e. Ethical issues that may arise related to the mentoring relationship;
f. Effective closure of the mentoring relationship; and
g. Sources of assistance available to support mentors.

Enhancements:

Mentor Training

E.3.1 Program uses evidence-based training materials.

E.3.2 Program provides additional pre-match training opportunities beyond the two-hour, in-person minimum.

E.3.3 Program addresses the following developmental topics in the training:
a. Youth development process;
b. Cultural, gender and economic issues; and
c. Opportunities and challenges associated with mentoring specific populations of children (e.g., children of prisoners, youth involved in the juvenile justice system, youth in foster care, high school dropouts), if relevant.

E.3.4 Program uses training to continue to screen mentors for suitability and develops techniques for early trouble-shooting should problems be identified.

Mentee Training

E.3.5 Program provides training for the mentee and his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) (when appropriate) on the following topics:
a. Program guidelines;
b. Mentors' obligations and appropriate roles;
c. Mentees' obligations and appropriate roles; and
d. Parental/guardian involvement guidelines.

Justification for Training Benchmarks:

Mentor Training

Mentor training is a vital component of any successful mentoring program.[1] Mentor training is particularly important because it has documented implications for mentors' perceptions about the mentor-mentee relationship, including their feelings of closeness, support, satisfaction and effectiveness as a mentor.[2,3,4] Further, these perceptions of the mentor-mentee relationship are thought to influence the positive outcomes and continuation of the mentor-mentee relationship, suggesting the lasting importance of mentor training for youth outcomes.[4]

Length of Mentor Training

According to recent research, community- and school-based mentors in Big Brothers Big Sisters of America programs who attended fewer than two hours of pre-match training reported less positive feelings of closeness and support about the relationship with their mentee, spent less time with their mentee and were less likely to continue their relationship into a second year than mentors who received more training.[3]

Content of Mentor Training

Mentors and mentees may experience difficulties when their motivations and goals for the mentoring relationship do not match. Mentors' motivations are especially influential in the early stages of the mentoring relationship.[5,6] Mentors' motivations also influence whether they obtain information about mentoring prior to the match, plan for future activities with their mentee and form expectations about the mentoring relationship.[7] And, mentors who report a discrepancy between their initial expectations of their relationship with their mentee and their actual post-match experiences with their mentee are less likely to report an intention to stay in the mentoring relationship.[8,9] Consequently, training should include a focus on mentor motivations, as well as on helping mentors to identify their goals, modify unrealistic expectations and plan to compare their goals with their mentees' goals to identify and address discrepancies between the two.

Given that having realistic expectations is associated with relationship longevity, training should address the needs of special populations of mentored youth, such as the children of prisoners, children in foster care, children in the juvenile justice system,

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children who have dropped out of school and immigrant children.[8,9] For example, immigrant youth face unique challenges, including stress related to discrimination, poverty and separation from family members.[10] Training for mentors of immigrant youth should raise volunteers' awareness of these challenges, as well as heighten their cultural sensitivity. In addition, training should stress the negative outcomes associated with early termination, as research suggests that the termination of a mentoring relationship may be particularly destructive for immigrant youth, especially if they have already experienced the loss of family members during the process of migration.[11]

In another example of a special population, children of incarcerated parents struggle with issues of trust and social stigma.[12] These children often believe that no one trusts them because of their parents' criminal history and have trust issues themselves due to their unstable family situation.[12] Training for mentors of this population should emphasize building trust, for example, by being consistent and following through with plans. Mentors of children of prisoners should also be aware of the possibility that their mentees may feel embarrassed about their parent's incarceration, and they should be equipped with the skills necessary to respond effectively in the event that these feelings are disclosed.[12]

Finally, long-term positive mentoring relationships develop through demonstrating positive relationship behaviors such as authenticity, empathy, collaboration and companionship.[9] Training should also focus on developing and sustaining these relationship-enhancing behaviors. Further, training on how to foster a developmental (i.e., cooperative, mentor-driven relationship designed to meet the needs of the mentee) versus prescriptive (i.e., mentor as authority figure) mentoring relationship is recommended.[13]

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Standard 4: Matching

Standard: Match mentors and mentees along dimensions likely to increase the odds that mentoring relationships will endure.

Benchmarks:

B.4.1 Program considers its aims, as well as the characteristics of the mentor and mentee (e.g., interests, proximity, availability, age, gender, race, ethnicity, personality and expressed preferences of mentor and mentee) when making matches.

B.4.2 Program arranges and documents an initial meeting between the mentor and mentee.

Enhancements:

E.4.1 Program staff member should be on site and/or present during the initial meeting of the mentor and mentee.

Justification for Matching Benchmarks:

Matching mentors and mentees based on similarities such as age, gender, race and ethnicity, as well as mutual interests, is frequently recommended. However, research comparing cross-race and same-race matches has found few, if any, differences in the development of relationship quality or in positive outcomes — suggesting that matching on race may not be a critical dimension of a successful mentoring relationship.[1,2] Thus, although the research is not yet conclusive, it has been suggested that matching based on qualities such as the mentor's skills and common interests with the youth should take precedence over matching based on race.[3]

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In addition, it has been suggested that a mentor's interpersonal skills be considered during the matching process.[4] For example, one specific interpersonal skill that has been studied in recent research, known as attunement, is defined as a mentor's ability to identify and solve relationship barriers. Research has found that the strongest mentor-mentee relationships are with mentors who were either highly or moderately attuned, which suggests that a mentor's ability to tune in to others should be considered in making a match.

Once matched, mentoring best practices suggest that mentors and mentees should have a formal, initial meeting documented by the mentoring program.[5]

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Standard 5: Monitoring and Support

Standard: Monitor mentoring relationship milestones and support mentors with ongoing advice, problem-solving support and training opportunities for the duration of the relationship.

Benchmarks:

B.5.1 Program contacts the mentor and mentee at a minimum frequency of twice per month for the first month of the match and monthly thereafter.

B.5.2 Program documents information about each mentor-mentee contact, including, at minimum, date, length and nature of contact.

B.5.3 Program provides mentors with access to at least two types of resources (e.g., expert advice from program staff or others; publications; Web-based resources; experienced mentors; available social service referrals) to help mentors negotiate challenges in the mentoring relationships as they arise.

B.5.4 Program follows evidenced-based protocol to elicit more in-depth assessment from the mentor and mentee about the relationship and uses scientifically-tested relationship assessment tools.

B.5.5 Program provides one or more opportunities per year for post-match mentor training.

Enhancements:

E.5.1 Program has quarterly contact with a key person in the mentee's life (e.g., parent, guardian or teacher) for the duration of the match.

E.5.2 Program hosts one or more group activities for mentors and their mentees, and/or offers information about activities that mentors and mentees might wish to participate in together.

E.5.3 Program thanks mentors and recognizes their contributions at some point during each year of the relationship, prior to match closure.

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Justification for Monitoring and Support Benchmarks:

Practices Designed to Provide Monitoring and Support

Matches that are monitored and supported are more satisfying and successful, which, in turn, leads to more positive youth outcomes.[1,2,3,4] Continued monitoring of the relationship should especially focus on the development of close relationships, as youth who perceive more trusting, mutual and empathic relations with their mentors experience greater improvements than youth who perceive lower levels of these relationship qualities.[5] Mentoring programs that provide monthly calendars of low-cost events, offer tickets to events or provide opportunities to participate in structured activities are associated with positive outcomes.[6]

Assessment of Mentor/Mentee Relationship

Assessing the quality of each mentoring relationship from the perspective of both the mentor and mentee can yield valuable information for supporting individual matches.[7,8] Many surveys have been developed for this purpose, but only a small number are evidence-based and have been rigorously evaluated for reliability and validity.[7] Programs could benefit by seeking out and using scientifically-validated surveys when assessing mentoring relationship qualities.

Advanced Mentor Training for Ongoing Support

After the mentor and youth have begun their relationship, mentors can benefit from additional training on topics such as increasing multicultural understanding, particularly regarding issues of race and class differences.[9] This type of training would provide mentors with the opportunity to identify and discuss possible cultural differences they and their mentee may encounter, which could help to prevent potential misunderstandings in the future.

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Standard 6: Closure

Standard: Facilitate bringing the match to closure in a way that affirms the contributions of both the mentor and the mentee and offers both individuals the opportunity to assess the experience.

Benchmarks:

B.6.1 Program has procedure to manage anticipated closures, including a system for a mentor or mentee rematch.

B.6.2 Program has procedure to manage unanticipated match closures, including a system for a mentor or mentee rematch.

B.6.3 Program conducts and documents an exit interview with mentor and mentee.

Enhancements:

E.6.1 Program explores opportunity to continue the mentor/mentee match for a second (or subsequent) year.

E.6.2 Program has a written statement outlining terms of match closure and policies for mentor/mentee contact after a match ends.

E.6.3 Program hosts a final celebration meeting or event with the mentor and mentee to mark progress and transition.

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Justification for Closure Benchmarks:

Prevention of Premature Closure

Research findings suggest that matches that end prematurely can result in negative outcomes for mentees such as increases in problem behaviors.[1] Thus, standards regarding closure are designed to prevent potentially avoidable, premature closures.

Reasons for Closure

Mentoring relationships can end for a wide range of reasons that are both predictable (e.g., conclusion of academic year program) and unpredictable (e.g., moving, illness). Also, closure may occur as a result of interpersonal or practical challenges that result in the mentor losing interest or motivation to sustain the mentoring relationship (e.g., mentee having no phone, failure of the mentee to attend scheduled meetings, failure to discuss personal issues).[1]

Closure Procedures

Regardless of why the mentoring relationship is ending, programs should always assist the mentor in trying to end the relationship on a positive note for everyone involved.[2] Program staff should provide pre- and post-match training to prepare mentors and mentees for anticipating the end of the relationship, as well as for how to end the mentoring relationship in a positive way.[3] Mentors and mentees should discuss memories of fun times they have had together and participate in a special activity for their last meeting.[4] A best practice guideline is to hold a graduation night, which allows mentees to have a sense of closure with both the mentor and the program.[2] Also, recognition of the specific contributions of mentors and mentees is recommended.[5]

An exit interview with the mentor and mentee can help the program determine whether there are any additional resources or supports that the program could provide that would allow the match to continue. Interviewing the mentor and mentee at the end of the relationship allows them to reflect on the positive experiences they shared and the impact that they had on each other. It also provides the mentoring program with an opportunity to assess how well it adhered to its own standards.

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Appendix A

Part II:

Program Design and Planning, Management, Operations and Evaluation

(**Source:** *Elements of Effective Practice*™, 2nd Edition, 2003)

Program Design and Planning

Design the parameters for the program:

- Define the youth population that the program will serve;
- Identify the types of individuals who will be recruited as mentors (such as senior citizens, corporate employees and college students);
- Determine the type of mentoring that the program will offer — one-to-one, group, team, peer or e-mentoring;
- Structure the mentoring program — as a stand-alone program or as part of an existing organization;
- Define the nature of the mentoring sessions (such as career involvement, academic support and socialization);
- Determine what the program will accomplish and what outcomes will result for the participants, including mentors, mentees and sponsoring organizations;
- Determine when the mentoring will take place;
- Determine how often mentors and mentees will meet and how long the mentoring matches should endure;
- Decide where mentoring matches primarily will meet — workplace, school, faith-based organization, juvenile corrections facility, community setting or virtual community;
- Decide who are program stakeholders and how to promote the program;

- Decide how to evaluate program success; and
- Establish case management protocol to assure that the program has regular contact with both mentors and mentees concerning their relationship.

Plan how the program will be managed:

- Select the management team:
  - Establish policies and procedures; and
  - Implement ongoing staff training and professional development.
- Develop a financial plan:
  - Develop a program budget;
  - Determine the amount of funding needed to start and sustain the program;
  - Identify and secure a diversified funding stream needed to start and sustain the program;
  - Determine the amount of time each funding source can be expected to provide resources;
  - Establish internal controls and auditing requirements; and
  - Establish a system for managing program finances.
- Implement the program:
  - Recruit program participants, such as mentors, mentees and other volunteers;
  - Screen potential mentors and mentees;
  - Orient and train mentors, mentees and parents/caregivers;
  - Match mentors and mentees;
  - Bring mentors and mentees together for mentoring sessions that fall within program parameters;
  - Provide ongoing support, supervision and monitoring of mentoring relationships;
  - Recognize the contribution of all program participants; and
  - Help mentors and mentees reach closure.
- Plan how to evaluate the program:
  - Decide on the evaluation design;
  - Determine what data will be collected, how it will be collected and the sources of data;
  - Determine the effectiveness of the program process;
  - Determine the outcomes for mentors and mentees; and
  - Reflect on and disseminate findings.

Appendix A

Program Management

Ensure the program is well-managed:

- Form an advisory group:
  - Define the advisory group roles and responsibilities;
  - Recruit people with diverse backgrounds to serve on the group; and
  - Facilitate the advisory group meetings to improve programming and management.

- Develop a comprehensive system for managing program information:
  - Manage program finances;
  - Maintain personnel records;
  - Track program activity, such as volunteer hours and matches;
  - Document mentor/mentee matches;
  - Manage risk; and
  - Document program evaluation efforts.

- Design a resource development plan that allows for diversified fundraising:
  - Seek in-kind gifts;
  - Hold special events;
  - Solicit individual donors;
  - Seek corporate donations;
  - Apply for government funding; and
  - Seek foundation grants.

Appendix A

- Design a system to monitor the program:
  - Review policies, procedures and operations on a regular basis;
  - Collect program information from mentors, mentees and other participants; and
  - Continually assess customer service.

- Create a professional staff development plan:
  - Provide ongoing staff training; and
  - Build on staff members' skills and knowledge.

- Advocate for mentoring:
  - Advocate for pro-mentoring, public policies and funding at the local, state and federal levels; and
  - Encourage private sector leaders to adopt pro-mentoring policies and provide funding.

- Establish a public relations/communications effort:
  - Identify target markets;
  - Develop a marketing plan;
  - Gather feedback from all constituents;
  - Develop partnerships and collaborations with other organizations; and
  - Recognize mentors, mentees, other program participants, funders and organizations that sponsor mentoring programs.

Appendix A

Program Operations

Ensure strong, everyday operations:

- Recruit mentors, mentees and other volunteers:
  - Define eligibility for participants, including mentors, mentees and parents/caregivers;
  - Market the program; and
  - Conduct awareness and information sessions for potential mentors.

- Screen potential mentors and mentees:
  - Require written applications;
  - Conduct reference checks, such as employment record, character reference, child abuse registry, driving record and criminal record checks;
  - Conduct face-to-face interviews; and
  - Hold orientations.

- Orient and train mentors, mentees and parents/caregivers:
  - Provide an overview of the program;
  - Clarify roles, responsibilities and expectations; and
  - Discuss how to handle a variety of situations.

- Match mentors and mentees:
  - Use established criteria;
  - Arrange an introduction between mentors and mentees; and
  - Ensure mentors, mentees and parents/caregivers understand and agree to the terms and conditions of program participation.

Appendix A

- Bring mentors and mentees together for mentoring sessions that fall within the program parameters:
  - Provide safe locations and circumstances; and
  - Provide resources and materials for activities.

- Provide ongoing support, supervision and monitoring of mentoring relationships:
  - Offer continuing training opportunities for program participants;
  - Communicate regularly with program participants and offer support;
  - Help mentors and mentees define next steps for achieving mentee goals;
  - Bring mentors together to share ideas and support;
  - Establish a process to manage grievances, resolve issues and offer positive feedback;
  - Assist mentors and mentees whose relationship is not working out; and
  - Ensure that appropriate documentation is done on a regular basis.

- Recognize the contribution of all program participants:
  - Sponsor recognition events;
  - Make the community aware of the contributions made by mentors, mentees, supporters and funders;
  - Actively solicit feedback from mentors and mentees regarding their experiences; and
  - Use information to refine program and retain mentors.

- Help mentors and mentees reach closure:
  - Conduct private, confidential interviews with mentors and mentees; and
  - Ensure mentors, mentees and parents/caregivers understand program policy regarding their meeting outside the program.

Appendix A

Program Evaluation

Ensure program quality and effectiveness:

- Develop a plan to measure program process:
  - Select indicators of program implementation viability and volunteer fidelity, such as training hours, meeting frequency and relationship duration; and
  - Develop a system for collecting and managing specified data.

- Develop a plan to measure expected outcomes:
  - Specify expected outcomes;
  - Select appropriate instruments to measure outcomes, such as questionnaires, surveys and interviews; and
  - Select and implement an evaluation design.

- Create a process to reflect on and disseminate evaluation findings:
  - Refine the program design and operations based on the findings; and
  - Develop and deliver reports to program constituents, funders and the media (at minimum yearly; optimally, each quarter).

For additional details about the research that underpins these guidelines and to learn more about the approaches to executing them, visit www.mentoring.org.

Appendix A

Glossary of Terms:

Responsible mentoring:

- Is a structured, one-to-one relationship or partnership that focuses on the needs of mentored participants.
- Fosters caring and supportive relationships.
- Encourages individuals to develop to their fullest potential.
- Helps an individual to develop his or her own vision for the future.
- Is a strategy to develop active community partnerships.

Types of Mentoring: Responsible mentoring can take many forms: traditional mentoring (one adult to one young person); group mentoring (one adult to up to four young people); team mentoring (several adults working with small groups of young people, in which the adult-to-youth ratio is not greater than 1:4); peer mentoring (caring youth mentoring other youth); and e-mentoring (mentoring via e-mail and the Internet).

Locations of Mentoring: Mentoring can take place in a wide array of settings, such as at a workplace, in a school, at a faith-based organization, at a juvenile corrections facility, in a community setting and in the virtual community, where e-mentoring takes place.

Source: Rhodes, J.E. (2002). *Stand by me: The risks and rewards of mentoring today's youth.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Appendix A

Acknowledgments

MENTOR is grateful to the hundreds of mentoring practitioners and researchers who so generously contributed their time and good counsel to the development of the third edition of *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring*™. It is their work, along with their dedication to sharing their best practices and research, which made this edition possible. And, it is their work which continues to propel mentoring to ever-higher levels of performance.

Special thanks also go to thoughtful reviewers drawn from the Federal Mentoring Council and its National Mentoring Working Group, Portland State University's Summer Institute on Mentoring Research, as well as to members of MENTOR's own Research and Policy Council and a National Executive Review Board composed of leaders from *Mentoring Partnerships* throughout the country.

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Research and Policy Council

Appendix A

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- Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation
- Family and Youth Services Bureau
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Association
- Children's Bureau

Department of Justice
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Department of Labor
- Employment & Training Administration
- Office of Disability Employment Policy

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National Mentoring Working Group of the Federal Mentoring Council

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Catholic Big Brothers
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Dare Mighty Things
Educate Tomorrow
Evaluation, Management & Training Associates
Ewing Kauffman Foundation
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Goodwill Industries
Harvard Mentoring Project
iMentor
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Michigan Community Service Commission
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National Alliance of Faith and Justice
National Coalition for Youth
National Human Services Assembly
National Network of Youth Ministries
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
Orphan Foundation of America
Phoenix House of New York
Points of Light/Hands on Network
Public/Private Ventures
Redwood Community Action Agency
Retired OPM
Special Olympics (e-Buddies)
United Way of America
Youth Build
YouthFriends
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Appendix A

MENTOR is leading the national movement to connect America's young people with the power of mentoring.

This project was funded by a generous grant from the MetLife® Foundation.

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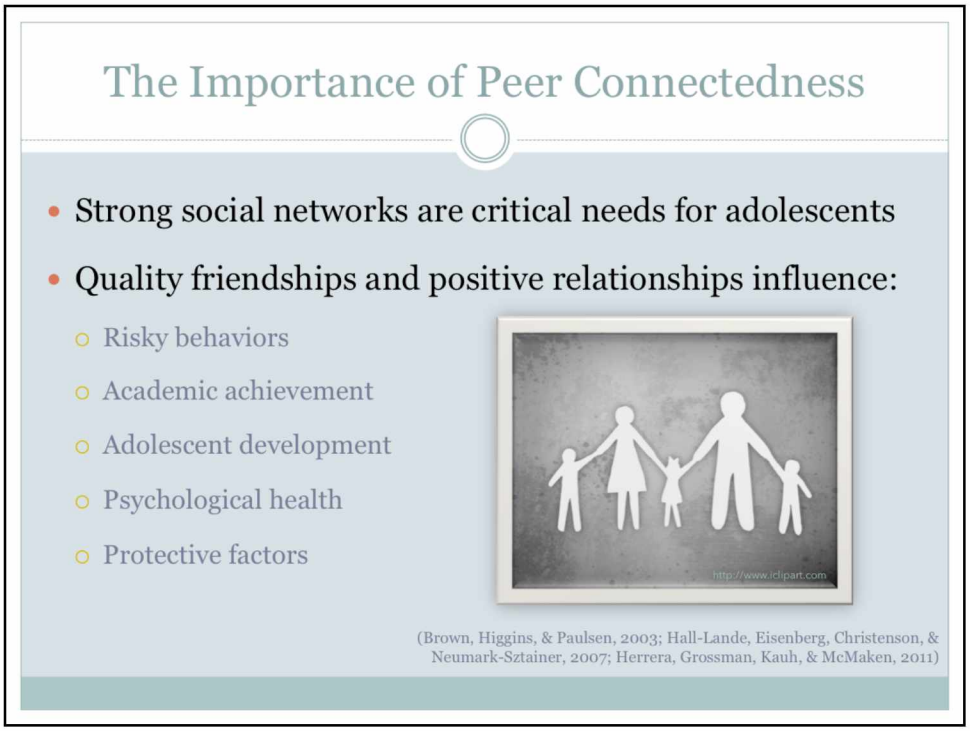
Appendix B

This is a presentation for secondary administration and staff members. The presentation objective is to provide a working knowledge about the importance of building school and peer connectedness for adolescents. The presentation will outline current research and the growing need for school-based peer-mentoring programs to increase school connectedness as a protective factor for students, especially for those students transitioning from (a) eighth grade to ninth grade, or (b) a new high school. The presentation is designed to be completed in 15 minutes.

Appendix B

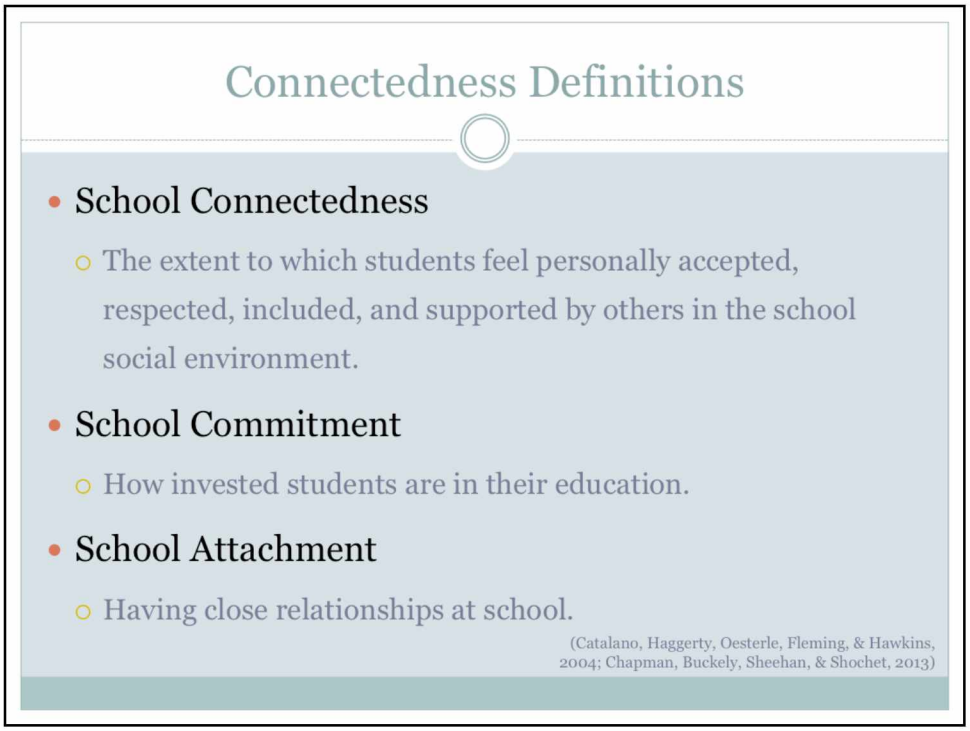


Independence and strong social networks are critical needs for adolescents. Adolescent psychological health hinges on family connectedness, meaningful peer relationships, academic achievement, and school connectedness (Hall-Lande, Eisenberg, Christenson, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2007).

Students that have high-quality, secure relationships are more apt to become independent, determined, and socially competent individuals, all of which are critical for healthy socioemotional and academic development (Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, & McMaken, 2011). There has been exponential growth in school-based mentoring programs to target student performance, student challenges, and academic success (Herrera et al., 2011).

Students who feel connected to school feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school social environment, all of which may guard against student alienation, poor self-esteem, and other deviant behaviors for adolescent youth.

Appendix B



Chapman, Buckely, Sheehan, and Shochet (2013) described school connectedness as "the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included and supported by others in the school social environment" (p. 96). Hall-Lande and colleagues (2007) further defined school connectedness as caring about school and feeling connected to both the school environment and staff. Schools that are able to effectively promote school connectedness among their students may positively affect their students' emotional, social, and academic efficacy.

School connectedness is influenced by two primary and interdependent components: school attachment– defined as having close relationships at school–and school commitment–defined as how invested students are in their education (Catalano et al., 2004). Both school attachment and school commitment contribute to how connected adolescents feels to their school.

Appendix B

The original group-mentoring program typologies were broken down into two categories, including "site-based" and "community-based" programs. Data used to analyze the typologies of mentoring programs was substantial; however, the Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies accounted for the majority of the program data, leaving other types of peer mentoring program typologies–including peer mentoring program designs–underrepresented (DuBois & Karcher, 2005).

Current academic literature has been produced to account for such underrepresented program typologies and to facilitate learning across a multitude of mentoring programs (DuBois & Karcher, 2005). Scholarly journals have increased publications to help further substantiate the theory and research behind mentoring programs, and organizations such as MENTOR (2009) have made available a wealth of information accessible to individuals and groups interested in implementing effective peer-mentoring programs. MENTOR is a national leader in connecting America's children and adolescents with mentoring services.

Many types of mentoring relationships exist including group mentoring (adult mentor to several youth), team mentoring (several adult mentors to several youth), traditional mentoring (one adult mentor to one youth), or peer mentoring (youth mentor to youth) (DuBois & Karcher, 2005).

Mentoring draws upon three areas of development that mentoring relationships should focus on to produce positive outcomes for the youth mentees, including (a) social-emotional development, (b) cognitive development, and (c) identity development. The mediator, parental and peer relationships, and moderating factors such as interpersonal history, social competencies, and developmental stages are also highly influential on a mentee's outcome as other key program areas. Mentoring programs that foster personal developmental growth in any one of the aforementioned areas are most likely to have the greatest impact on youth, such as an increase in academic achievement, emotional well-being, and expressing positive behaviors (DuBois & Karcher, 2005).

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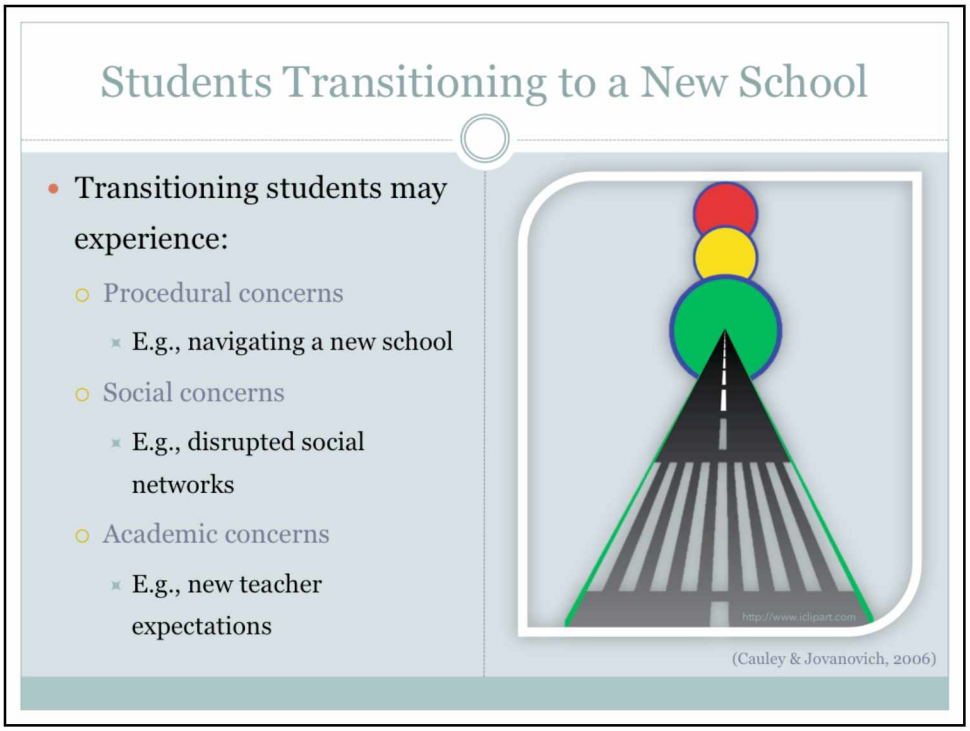

The transition to a new high school can disrupt social networks, cause anxiety, and hinder academic success for secondary students.

According to Cauley and Jovanovich (2006), transitioning students may face procedural, social, and academic challenges when moving to a new school. Procedural concerns encompass anxieties about changes in school climate and size, different school rules and policies, and changes in school procedures. Social concerns deal with peer and teacher relationships, acceptance, and safety. Academic challenges include schoolwork expectations, navigating teacher personalities and teaching styles, and learning how to succeed academically in a new school climate. Peer-mentoring transition programs can help to ease transitional stressors by implementing intervention strategies focusing on procedural, social, and academic concerns.

Appendix B

Comprehensive school-based peer-mentoring programs that focus on transitioning secondary students have the potential to alleviate the anxiety of a changing school climate by promoting school connectedness, building peer relationships, and being sensitive to the social, academic, and procedural concerns of transitioning secondary students (Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006).

According to Cauley and Jovanovich (2006) more students fail the ninth grade than any other grade, and economically disadvantaged and minority students are twice as likely as to be held back. The following presentation discusses the importance of quality friendships and positive relationships for students, and how focused school-based peer-mentoring programs for adolescents may help to build school and peer connectedness; promote academic achievement, healthy development, and psychological health; increase protective factors; and decrease risky behaviors.

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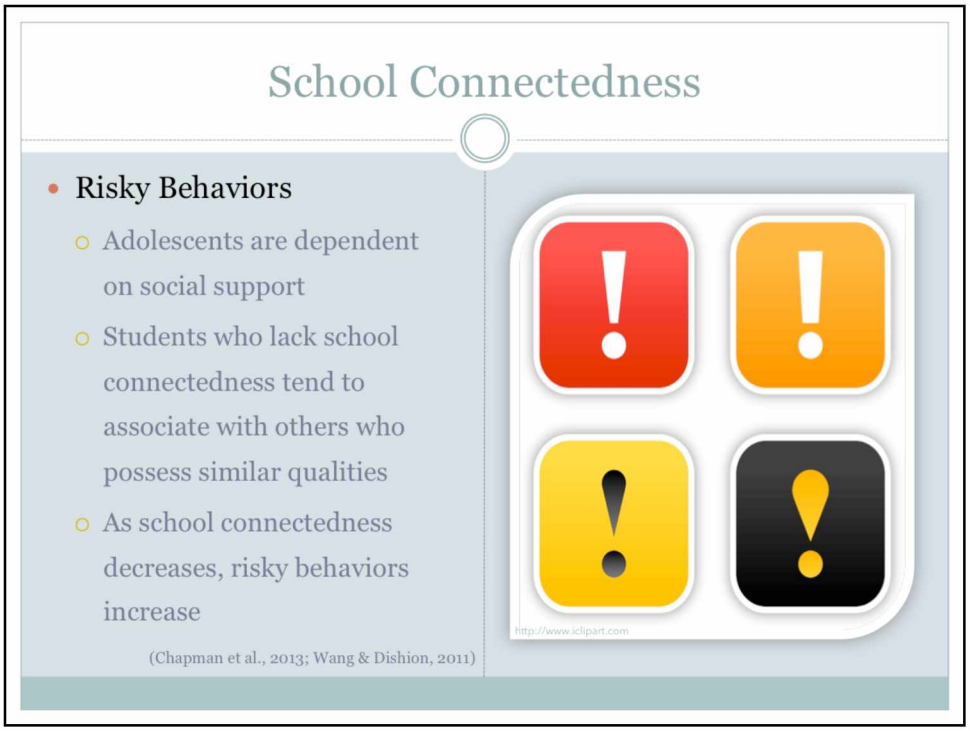

RISKY BEHAVIORS: School connectedness is negatively associated with risk-taking behaviors for adolescents (Chapman et al., 2013; Wang & Dishion, 2011). Chapman et al. (2013) defined risky behaviors as "any action that involves choice, uncertain outcomes, and the potential for negative consequences" (p. 99). The authors found that adolescents became increasingly dependent on peers for social and emotional support and development, and students who lacked school connectedness and positive peer groups were at a higher risk of becoming involved in deviant peer groups (Wang & Dishion, 2011). Wang and Dishion defined deviant peer affiliations as associating with a group of friends that offer each other support and positive reinforcement for oppositional behaviors.

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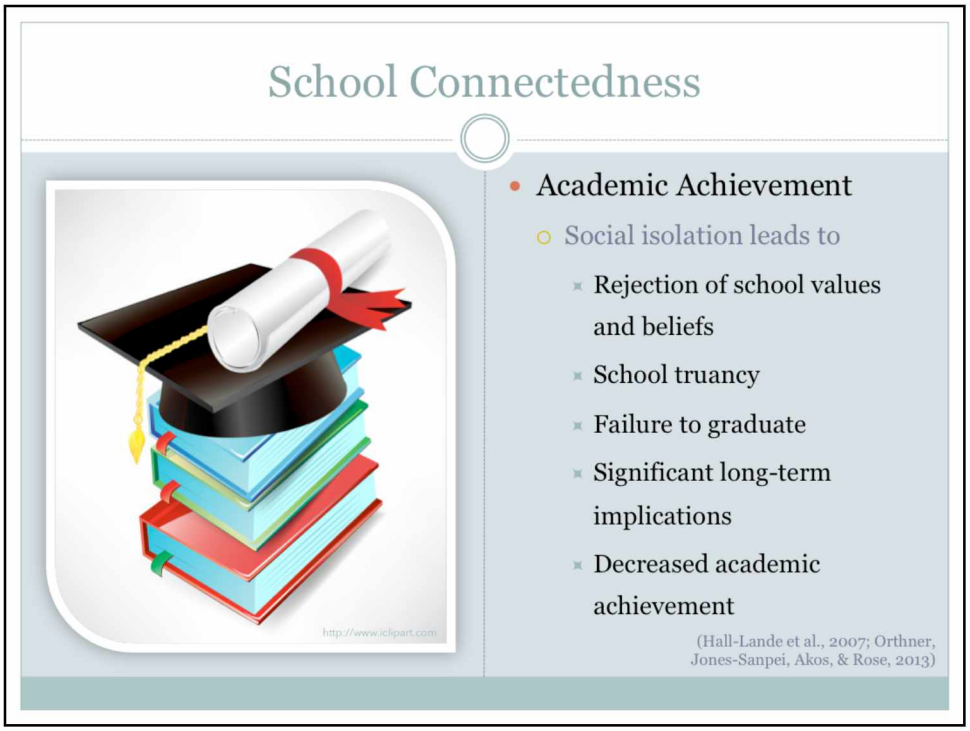

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: Students who are not connected to their school environment are at risk for negative outcomes, such as school truancy, failure to graduate from high school, and experiencing psychological health risks and distress (Hall-Lande et al., 2007). Socially isolated individuals in a school setting typically reject the values and beliefs of school, do not see the goals of school as important, and are not concerned with completing school or achieving academic success (Brown et al., 2003). A positive relationship exists between school connectedness and academic success (Orthner, Jones-Sanpei, Akos, & Rose, 2013).

Statistics have shown that only three quarters of high school students complete high school within the recommended four-year period (Orthner et al., 2013). In 2012, the status dropout rate for 16 to 24-year olds in the United States was 7 % (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2014). The U.S. Department of Education NCES (2014) defined status dropout rate as "the percentage of 16 to 24-year olds who are not enrolled in school and have not earned a high school credential (either a diploma or an equivalency credential such as a General Education Development [GED] certificate)" (para. 1).

Students who have an active social learning environment, are engaged in their education, consider their schooling valuable, and are participatory in school activities have a higher likelihood of feeling connected to school, thus increasing their chances for academic achievement (Orthner et al., 2013). Schools are in a position to positively influence the social and learning environments of the classroom. Encouraging healthy peer relationships, emboldening academic and teacher support, and appropriately and fairly managing behaviors may directly influence student engagement and academic success (Orthner et al., 2013).

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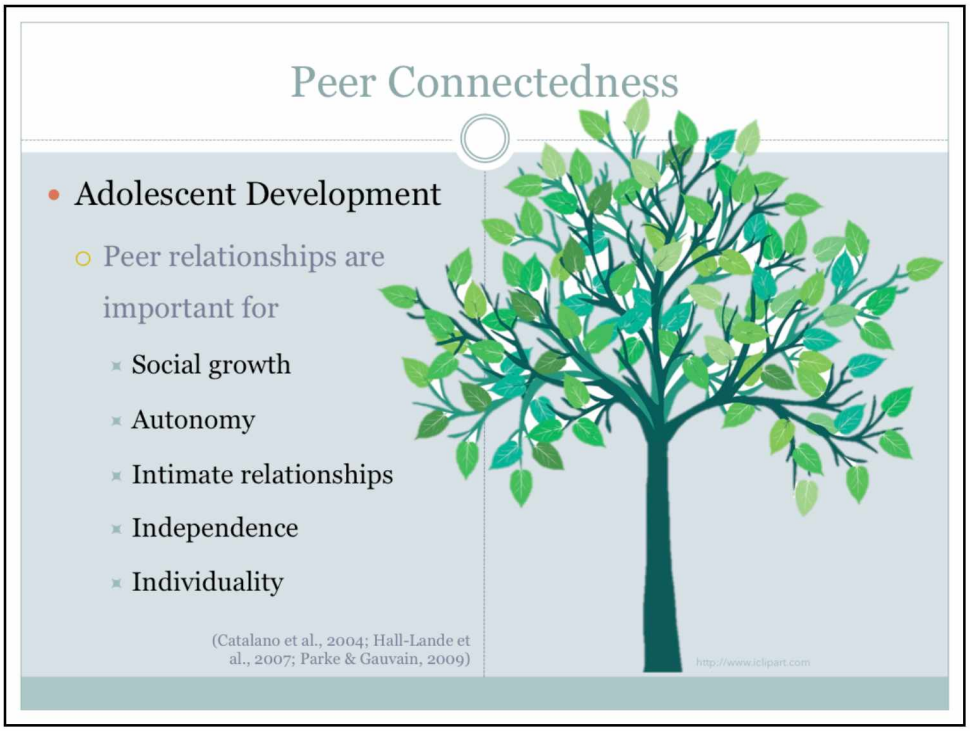

ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT: Healthy peer relationships are important for social development in adolescents and stimulate developmentally appropriate social growth (Catalano et al., 2004; Hall-Lande et al., 2007). Peers become important for adolescents who are looking for autonomy, intimate relationships, and independence from their family structures. Peers are able to communicate on a level playing field, have egalitarian interactions with one another, and learn how to function and develop as individual people within their own cultural world (Parke & Gauvain, 2009). Regardless of whether peer circles are positive or negative, adolescents invest in friends for social and emotional support and use peer feedback for a sense of acceptance and self-worth.

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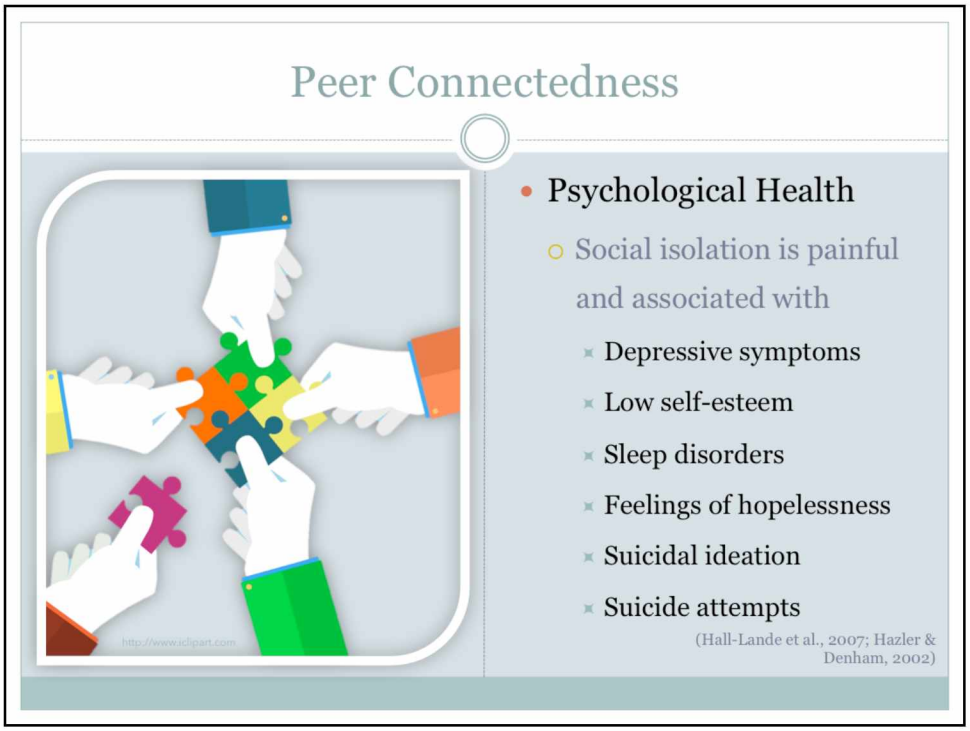

PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH: Adolescents oftentimes magnify social and personal situations (Hazler & Denham, 2002) and the process of adolescent change can be emotionally uncomfortable for youth (Schulz, 2011). Families, schools, and peers are three of the most influential factors that contribute to adolescent health, and positive peer relationships may be one of the most stabilizing components of future psychological health (Hall-Lande et al., 2007). Although adolescents may want autonomy, they are also reliant upon strong social support (Hall-Lande et al., 2007; Roybal, Thornton, & Usinger, 2014).

Adolescents struggling with social isolation feel lonely and have lower levels of self-worth. Additionally, poor perceptions of positive relationships with family and friends have been associated with suicidal ideation and attempts (Hall-Lande et al., 2007). Isolation can lead to feelings of marginalization and unacceptability, which are also key factors in increasing the risk of suicidal behaviors (Hazler & Denham, 2002). Increasing school and peer connectedness and decreasing social isolation may positively affect school truancy and dropout rates, and diminish negative psychological factors (Brown et al., 2003; Hall-Lande et al., 2007).

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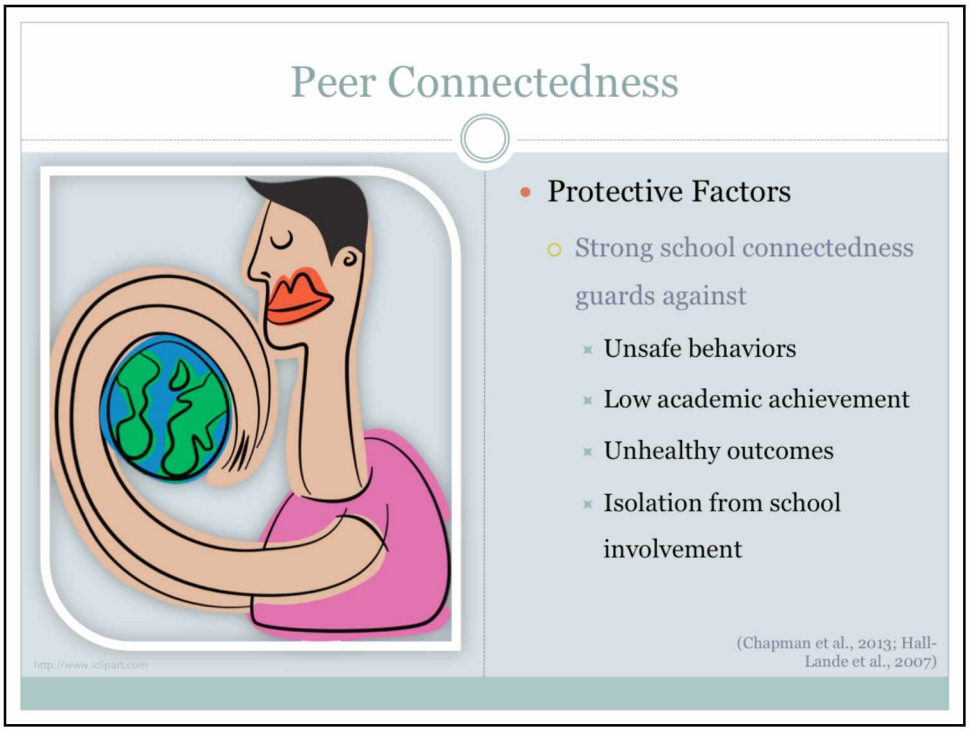

PROTECTIVE FACTORS: Strong relationships at school can increase school connection and motivation, and may have a positive influence on students that lasts a lifetime. Furthermore, strong school connectedness is associated with safer behaviors, higher academic achievement, healthy outcomes, and extracurricular involvement (Hall-Lande et al., 2007). In another research article, Chapman and colleagues (2013) established that school connectedness was a key protective factor in school retention, emotional health and well-being, and that schools are in a unique position to help foster school connectedness to reduce risk-taking behaviors.

School connectedness has been associated with motivation and academic achievement, healthy social and emotional development, and reduced risk-taking behaviors. Furthermore, adolescents that feel connected to school have a lower probability of partaking in unsafe behaviors later in adolescence (Chapman et al., 2013). Increasing protective factors (e.g., school connectedness) not only directly affects adolescent behaviors within the school environment, but beyond the school environment as well.

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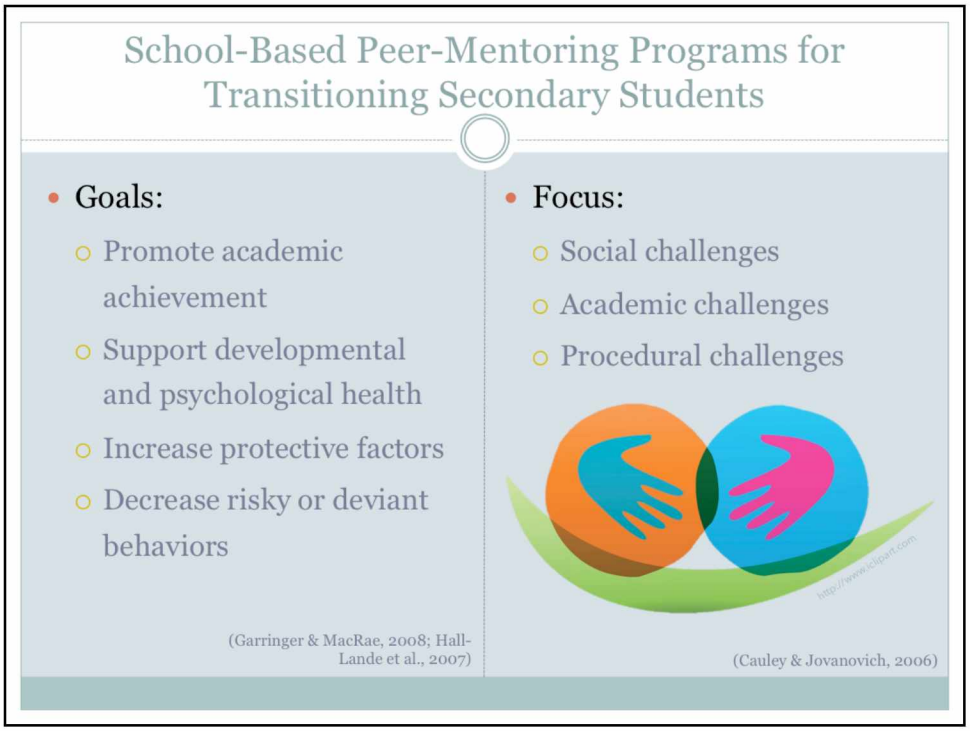

Schools that are able to effectively promote school connectedness among their students may positively affect their students' emotional, social, and academic efficacy (Hall-Lande et al., 2007).

Establishing a school-based peer-mentoring program at the high school level has the potential to have lasting positive outcomes for both the mentors and the transitioning students (Garringer & MacRae, 2008). In addition, students that have worked with peer mentors show a positive impact on competency, self-efficacy, academic achievement, and prosocial behaviors. Peer mentors also report positive improvements in self-esteem, the ability to empathize with others, honing in on interpersonal communication and conflict resolution skills, and having improved relationships with their parents (Garringer & MacRae, 2008).

The goals of a school-based peer mentoring program are to build school connectedness and increase social connectedness, while alleviating social, academic, and procedural anxieties about transitioning to a new school.

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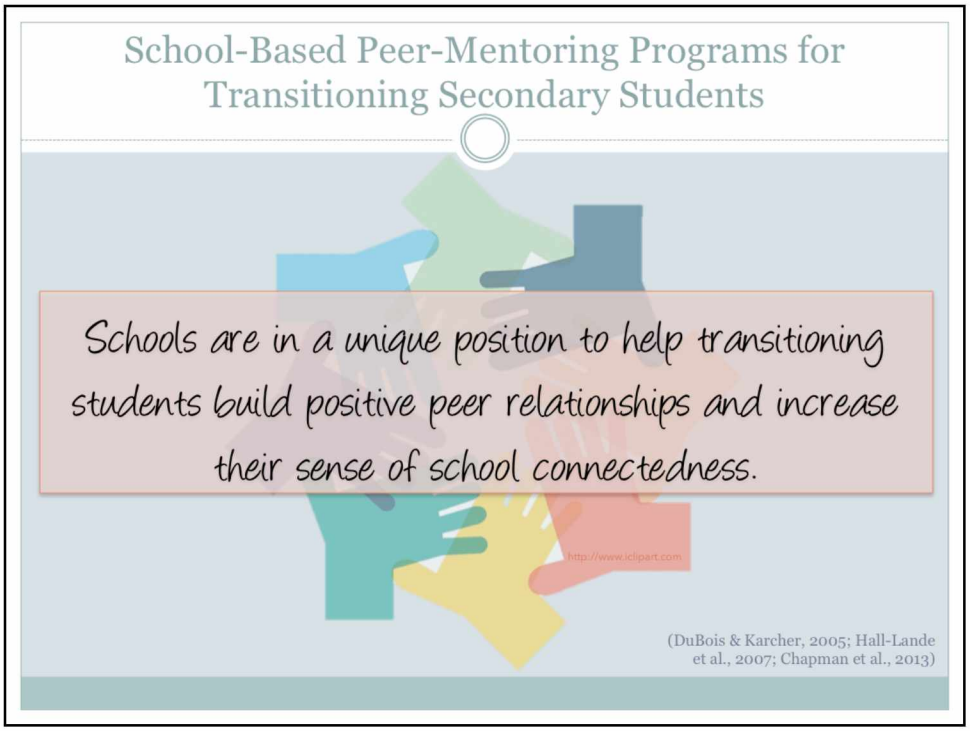

Formal school mentoring programs have gained popularity as a way to build school and peer connectedness, support healthy adolescent development, and serve as a protective factor for school-aged individuals (Dubois & Karcher, 2005). Focused school-based mentoring programs– such as a peer-mentoring program for transitioning high school students–can target school connectedness, promote social bonding, and foster a sense of belonging, all of which may reduce risk-taking behaviors and promote academic success (Chapman et al., 2013).

Students who are connected, or bonded, to school generally experience positive outcomes, such as higher academic achievement (Catalano et al., 2004). On the contrary, poor school connectedness lead to deviant peer affiliations and behavior problems for adolescents. Students who did not feel connected to school were at a higher risk for truancy; school noncompletion; violence; and use of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs (Catalano et al., 2004; Schulz, 2011).

These key findings implicate the unique situation secondary schools are in to develop focused prevention and intervention programs that aim to encourage school connectedness, peer relationships, healthy adult relationships, and academic achievement among its adolescent youth.

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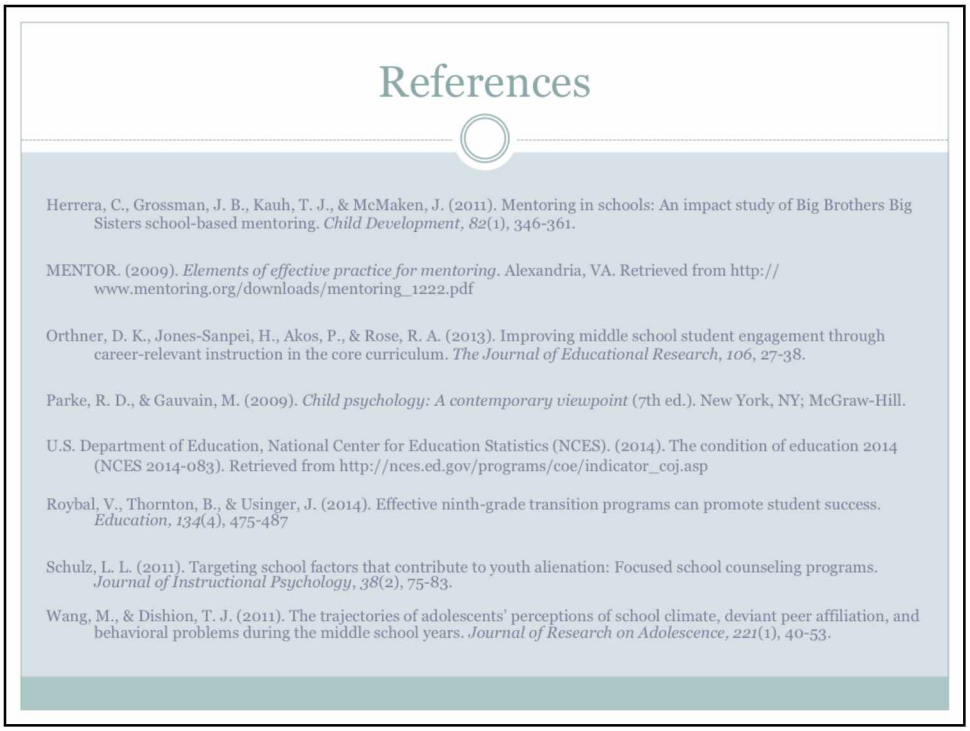
Appendix B



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Appendix C

Steps for Creating and Implementing a School-Based Peer-Mentoring Program for Transitioning Secondary Students

Goals of a school-based peer-mentoring program for transitioning secondary students:

1. Build school connectedness
2. Increase social capital
3. Alleviate social, academic, and procedural anxieties about transitioning to a new school

School connectedness: The extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school social environment

Social capital: The existence of positive relationships with other students and staff members

(Hall-lande, Eisenberg, Christenson, Neumark-Sztainer, 2007; Roybal, Thornton, & Usinger, 2014)

Transitioning students may face procedural, social, and academic challenges when moving to a new school.

Procedural concerns encompass anxieties about changes in school climate and size, different school rules and policies, and changes in school procedures. Social concerns deal with peer and teacher relationships, acceptance, and safety. Academic challenges include schoolwork expectations, navigating teacher personalities and teaching styles, and learning how to academically succeed in a new school climate.

(Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006)

Preliminary Planning Steps

- Establish program stakeholders to develop program policies, oversee operations, and ensure program efficiency and effectiveness.
  - ✳ Stakeholders may include the site coordinator, teachers, counselors, school administrators, or other adult leaders.
- Clearly define the school's goals and objectives for a peer-mentoring program.
- Decide on a focus.
  - ✳ Programs may aim to help transitioning students overcome social, academic, and/or procedural challenges.
- Develop a financial plan that determines the amount of funding needed to develop and sustain a program. Afterwards, program stakeholders are accountable for finding and applying for diversified funding (e.g., local community grants, regional or state organizations, national funding awards).

Recruiting, Screening, and Referring

- Establish recruitment, screening, and referral processes for mentors and mentees.
- Recruit secondary students to be peer-mentors for transitioning students.
  - ✳ Potential youth mentors should display a high level of social interest, consistently attend school and pass their classes, communicate effectively, and demonstrate personal stability.
- Screen potential youth mentors (e.g., through an application process or requiring recommendations).

(Garringer & MacRae, 2008; MENTOR, 2009)

Appendix C

Training Opportunities

- The site coordinator is tasked with developing and offering training programs to build basic knowledge about peer-mentoring programs and how to develop effective relationships with future mentees. Trainings should:
  - Be at least 2-hours of pre-match, in-person training.
  - Not exceed 30 to 50 minute per session.
  - Go over program rules; establish mentor goals and expectations for the mentor/mentee relationship; outline mentor obligations and appropriate roles; learn how to develop and maintain relationships; become educated in ethical issues that may arise during the mentoring relationship; discuss how to effectively close a mentoring relationship; and determine where mentors find available support when needed.
  - Be delivered in a variety of activities and approaches (e.g., lectures, small groups, or webinars).

Plan a Calendar for the School Year

- Plan a 10-month school calendar of activities and meeting times for youth mentors.
  - Include activities that begin before the school year for students new to the area.
  - Decide on interventions that align with the focus of the peer mentoring program (see below).
- Allow enough time at the end of the school year to properly close out the mentoring relationships.
- Plan for the following year.

(Garringer & MacRae, 2008; MENTOR, 2009)

Procedural Challenges	**Activities to Alleviate Procedural Challenges**
E.g., Not knowing where classes are located; difficulties navigating a new school or finding common landmarks, like bathrooms, the library, or the gym	Organize a school tour; host a "Locker Night" before the start of school for students to find their lockers and test their combination; have peer mentors assist with transition time between classes
Social Challenges	**Activities to Alleviate Social Challenges**
E.g., Unknown peer and teacher relationships, departmentalization among peers, peer acceptance	Send out letters to new students; organize a picnic meet-and-greet with school teachers and principals; host a "Club Rush" where new students may "rush" clubs they are interested in joining
Academic Challenges	**Activities to Alleviate Academic Challenges**
E.g., Adjusting to school competitiveness and social comparison, having to conform to policies and rules during a time when autonomy is important, experiencing a decline in school connectedness and motivation	Organize opportunities for "High School Shadow Days;" provide information about gradation credit requirements, offered courses, and how to check grades online

(Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006)

Additional Online Resources for School-Based Peer-Mentoring Programs

- MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership at www.mentoring.org
- Building Effective Peer Mentoring Programs in Schools at www.edmentoring.org